

# Band Parent Frequently Asked Questions

February 2009

## MEMBERSHIP

### **What is the focus of band program?**

The focus of the Thousand Oaks Instrumental Music Department is to provide an area of musical growth creating teamwork through individual and group excellence. It's where all students can participate as an individual and become a rewarded member of our team.

Our goal is individual excellence in instrumental music and visual performance.

We have a variety of different ensembles that our students participate in: marching band, three concert bands, two jazz ensembles, color guard, winter guard, percussion ensemble, and drum line. That's ten ensembles plus a variety of extra smaller ensembles that the students put together themselves that provide opportunities and excellence in music and visual performance.

### **Can a beginning player in band or someone who has never played before be in band?**

This question is answered in many different ways.

Any student that wants to join our color guard can join without experience. A color guard member will be evaluated and given performance responsibility based on the right level of experience and success.

A musician that is coming in that has previous musical experience whether through their own middle school band program and/or private lessons is evaluated as any other band member and placed in the correct class for the right level of experience and success.

A beginning student can be accepted, after an evaluation, and may be asked to take private lessons so they can get caught up musically with their class. The reason we do this is we want every student to feel as though they are an integral part and valued member of our program, where they participate and add to the group efforts of the team.

### **Do the musicians have to be top notch on their instrument?**

We are an educational institution and it is our job to provide opportunities for growth for all individuals. If we provide growth for an individual then of course the ensemble that the

individual is apart of will grow as well. It's our hope that we have the ability to create an opportunity for growth and for excellence and we want all students to perform at the best of their ability while feeling comfortable about their progress. We take students from all ranges of experience, from novice to advanced, and we have a tiered system for performance within the color guard as well as a tiered system for our three concert bands so that every student can experience success in their area of skill.

**Do we have to purchase a musical instrument?**

The band has a limited number of speciality instruments to round out the instrumentation of the band. Most students either buy their own instrument while a few students rent instruments from a music store.

Students interested in using district-owned instruments are required to follow the instrument checkout procedures. These procedures include: completion of the designated check-out form with proper adult and student signatures, payment of a modest usage fee and adherence to the guidelines stipulated on the signed contract with regard to maintaining the condition of the instrument and assuring that it is serviced only by a qualified musical instrument repairman approved by Mr. Martone.

**How are students (Woodwind and Brass) placed into the appropriate band?**

In May/June, we will have placement auditions to appropriately place each musician in a class where he /she will be most successful. Each student will be placed in one of the band classes based on the audition results. The counselors, just prior to the start of the school year, will adjust your schedule to reflect your placement with Mr. Martone's approval. Students will not be promoted up to an advanced level to fix scheduling conflicts.

**Can my student be in band while taking a full academic load?**

Yes, you definitely can take a full academic load and still be in band. Occasionally scheduling conflicts do occur. Please, call Mr. Martone if you cannot resolve a conflict and he will attempt to help you work out the problem. Highly motivated students use summer school to ease school year academic scheduling demands.

**Will my child be able to keep up his/her grades?**

The answer is definitely "YES". The important lessons that band students learn (commitment to excellence, preparation, time-management, dedication, and self-discipline) carry over into academic areas. The band's average GPA is above 3.0 and many band members are honor students. Several have a 4.0 GPAs or higher. Band students are definitely above average in academic areas and, with few exceptions, they attend college after graduating from high school.

**Is Visual/Performing Credit given for band?**

YES, all levels of instrumental music plus AM Jazz band and second Semester Color Guard earn UC and CSU credit for fine arts as well as satisfying the School District graduation requirement for visual and performing arts.

**Can my child be in band while participating in a sport?**

Being in band and on an athletic team can present a scheduling problem--it depends on the sport season dates and the coach. Participation in fall sports is difficult because, like band, most teams also practice during the afternoon. Most winter and spring sports do not present a problem.

**TIME****What kind of time commitment does band involve?**

The Marching Band rehearses 8th period (3:00 PM) every school day in the fall and competes somewhere in Southern California 6 Saturdays from early October through the third week of November. One or two overnight trips are planned for the marching season. We also perform at 4-6 home Friday night football games.

Most activities for Symphonic Band, Wind Symphony, Wind Ensemble and Jazz Band occur during the second semester. These groups participate in the December Holiday Concert. During the second semester, they perform at two or three afternoon or evening concerts and attend one or two musical festivals. In addition, it is expected that students will practice at home every day. Private lessons are strongly encouraged. A list of local private teachers is posted in the band room.

Winter Guard and Spring Drum Line are 2<sup>nd</sup> semester optional activities involving additional time and financial commitments.

**How much extra time is involved with band?**

Each band class meets daily for one class period during the school day. Each band class is a year long class. Each band student also participates in the Marching Band which meets daily, as a class (period 8). 8th period attendance is taken at 3:00 and the class with different ending times depending on the focus of the day. Sometimes its 4:30 and/or 5:00. Typically the 8<sup>th</sup> period class puts in 7-1/2 hours per week of rehearsal Monday through Friday. The 8th period

On average, we spend 17 more hours of Marching Band P.E. for the 1st semester than a regular P.E. Class, as we do not meet for 1 or 2 weeks in December and the entire month of January.

**What and when is band camp? Must everyone attend?**

We host two band camps during the summer months. Each camp is held on the TOHS campus. The focus is on learning marching, routines and music for the fall field show. It is here that our Brass/Woodwind Instrumentalists, Color Guard and Drum Line come together as a team, passing down Lancer traditions while working hard and having fun preparing for a successful year. The August Camp is a mandatory camp.

June Camp: Monday and Tuesday, directly after the regular school year ends.  
8:30AM - 4:30PM with a 90-minute lunch break.

August Camp: Monday - Friday (Mandatory) 8:30AM-4:30PM with a 90-minute lunch break.

The Drum Line and Color Guard have extended schedules, rehearsing periodically during June and July. This schedule is announced in June.

**What if my child will not be able to attend band camp?**

If your child cannot make August Band Camp, you should contact Mr. Martone immediately to work out a possible solution. Typically this is a situation where any new incoming ninth grade student is not aware of our summer schedule because of late registration. It would be odd for a returning member to miss any part of band camp.

We have a 2-day mini camp at the conclusion of the school year where it's the first Monday and Tuesday of summer and we try to get the new material out and the group of students together under new student leadership. We will play through the music and have an understanding of fundamentals and what we expect the students to work on throughout the summer. Then when we return in August we like to have all the students there so we can move the program forward with all the instructors and help to put our best foot forward for a great successful band season.

We have a mandatory band camp in August. It is mandatory because we do the majority of our teaching of our competitive field show. We try to get as much in as possible before the student's responsibility to other classes begins. This is 2-full weeks prior to the start of school.

Volunteers and staff are on hand FULL TIME to work on the completion of the competitive show. This includes the fitting of uniforms, building of props and individualized attention to sections of the band.

**What kind of time commitment is a Friday Football Night?**

The students come to a normal school day including 8<sup>th</sup> period marching band rehearsal and then go right into dinner. The boosters feed the students dinner, (that is part of the expenses that you pay). We get approximately an hour dinner break; change into uniform in designated changing areas. Kids go to specific areas to warm up, and then line up to go to the stadium. We participate in pre-game performance activities and in the stands during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. We then perform our competitive show for half-time. We wrap up with comments to the students during the third quarter, and return to the stands to play for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter until the end of the game. We march back to the Quad for dismissal. All equipment is put away, we change out of uniform and we are done for the night. Typically students are dismissed between 9:30-10:00 p.m.

This schedule takes place usually for (4) four football games. We do have a 5<sup>th</sup> game which is Homecoming, we sometimes perform for that game but typically we perform for (4) four regular season home games.

**What is the time commitment for Saturday Band Competition?**

We compete on (6) six Saturdays in the fall in the month of October and November. We ask that those days be kept completely open for band because we don't get notification on our performance times until a week prior to the date.

If there is a prelim and finals performance in the same day, we will meet in the morning and travel to our competition site, perform at prelims and participate in finals typically after dinner.

Our performance time for a one-performance contest is usually late in the evening because we compete in the highest classification. Sometimes we are home by 11 p.m. and sometimes its 1 a.m. in the morning. The times are all subject to the competition schedule and distance traveled for that particular event.

**What is a competition day like?**

We arrive here at the high school and have a brief rehearsal, maybe 2 hours, have a snack, gather all of our belongings and head of to the bus. Sometimes we get dressed at school and board the busses, and sometimes we board the busses and dress once we arrive at the site. Once at the site, we unload and get our equipment ready, get changed, eat dinner or the appropriate meal and prepare for our performance. Once the performance is complete, if time allows we will change out of our uniform, put our equipment away and come back to the stadium for awards. If time does not allow and typically because we perform late in the evening, we will stay in uniform for the awards, after the awards we will put our equipment and uniforms away and head back home.

The boosters handle all of the support to be able to feed, prep and move the group and all of our equipment. We invite you to be a part of that.

## **TRIPS**

### **How is the band organized for trips?**

We have plenty of experience with organizing the band for trips. We have one chaperone for every 8-10 students. If it's an overnight trip the boys are in boy's room and girls are in girl's rooms. They are placed on separate floors of the hotel. The kids sign up for a bus so they can sit and travel with their friends, whether it's a school or charter bus. We provide activities, either rehearsal or some kind of planned activity so that all of their time is structured and that it puts us in the best position possible to perform at our highest level.

The funding for all the trips is something that is worked into your band fees so when you pay the fee for the fall all of the trips are included in that fee. It is not something where the program states we are adding a trip and you will have to come up with additional funding. It has all been pre-planned and worked out for the entire year.

Sometimes in the second semester the Jazz Band will go to the Reno Jazz Festival. This is an event that is not planned in the fall fees and there would be additional fees for that event.

Also our OPTIONAL Second Semester Drum Line and Winter Guard groups are organized like the fall so a schedule of rehearsals, competitions and fees for that specific winter/spring program would be announced as a separate fee package. These activities are not included in the fall fees. Fall fees are strictly used for the Marching Band Activities.

## **FINANCE**

### **How much will I pay for my student to be in band?**

The students in the band program pay the same District Fees as any other sport or activity on campus. The District requires a uniform fee of \$100 per year and a transportation fee of \$118 per year to cover transportation expenses incurred by the yellow school busses. Our band program travels on charter busses on weekends in the fall and sometimes in the spring because of the number of hours that we are participating in an event and/or the distance involved. We want to keep our students well cared for and rested so they don't miss any school and can be successfully active not only in band but in all their academics.

We also collect transportation expense money above and beyond the yellow school buses for regular charter buses as well as equipment trucks to be used to move all of our equipment. We also collect for expenses to cover all our food costs so we can feed the students at the Friday night football games or Saturday competitions and we collect for alternate uniforms costs. A Fair Share Donation is collected which helps to pay for the additional instruction costs which makes the teacher student ratio a better ratio so kids can be successful.

**Individual expenses for the 2008-2009 Band Student are estimated below.**

"Major Performance Trip" years will have added costs related to airfare and extended hotel accommodations.

District Fees: Uniform \$100 and transportation \$118

Marching Season Expenses: Amount TBD. These Expenses include (meals, travel, fair share donation) includes overnight trip expenses. Actual expenses are to be discussed at the May meeting.

ASB Fees: \$150 Associated Student Body Fee for Band is collected per student. This fee can be fundraised. An early buyout option of \$100 per student is available if paid on or before October 15.

Alternate Uniform Costs depend on the items needed. Please see alternate attire question.

School Instrument Fee is required, \$50 per semester, for students who use District Owned Instruments (Brass, Woodwind, Percussion).

School Equipment Fee is required, \$25 per semester, for Color Guard students for use of school owned color guard equipment.

Concert Season: \$70 (required performance dress) \$70-\$150 (required performance tux)  
Those students choosing to participate in optional groups such as Winter Guard, Spring Drum Line and Jazz Band will have additional expenses.

**How can I make band more affordable?**

The Boosters sponsor fund-raising opportunities to help individual students earn money to pay band expenses. We maintain individual student savings accounts (ISSA) where the student portions of fund raising profits are deposited. Motivated families have raised enough to cover 100% of the student fees. Regular participation in our scrip/gift card program is a painless way to earn substantial dollars. Earnings are split 50/50 between your individual account and the booster club's general fund. You may begin purchasing scrip/gift cards up to one year prior to the first day of June Band Camp (incoming 9th grader). In the event your student does not participate in band, the earnings in your student savings account can be donated to a participating member of band or your choosing or to the booster scholarship fund.

The Ad Book campaign is also another major fundraising opportunity to help reduce the costs of band. Please check out our fundraising-planning document for more opportunities to build your ISSA account. Volunteers are a vital part to presenting fundraising opportunities to band families.

**I heard band is expensive. If I cannot afford it, can my musician still participate?**

Financial Hardship Scholarships are available to eligible students. Application for a fee waiver must be made to the CVUSD through the Athletic Office at TOHS. Once a waiver for the current academic year is received, members are considered for a TOHS Lancer Band Booster Club Inc. hardship scholarship. The amount available is determined by the donations made to the Booster Club Scholarship Account and are used to offset marching season expenses. Further information is available upon request from the Band Office or the Booster President.

In an effort to minimize financial impacts, monthly payments are requested commencing in May. The Booster Club accepts cash (please do not put cash in white box), checks, credit cards, and individual student account withdrawals. Full payment of Marching Season Expenses is required for overnight travel.

**The White Box - What is it? Where is it?**

The white box is a collection box located in the band room adjacent to the band office door. This is where all documents and payments are deposited.

**What is an ISSA account and what money is allowed to be put in it?**

ISSA stands for Individual Student Savings Account. It is any fundraised money or any money deposited in that student's account for use for any band activity. That could be a band trip, band expenses, ASB fee, alternate uniform, new instrument, instrument repair, instrument accessories (reeds, mouthpieces, and mutes etc...), color guard equipment such as a rifle or saber or any band fee/expense. Anything that is music related that you want to spend it on. There are several different ways to utilize it, if you have money in your account you can fill out and place in the white box a transfer request form, which states your specific request of funds from that account to be transferred to any other booster account or ASB account. Another way is if you buy something at the music store, you can attach your receipt to the form and money will be reimbursed to you.

**Can my student carry their fundraising savings over from year to year?**

Yes, if all expenses for the year have been paid, money in an ISSA can be saved year after year to pay for future band expenses. ISSA savings can be used for; trips, supplies, lessons and

repair or purchase of instruments used in the program and will be carried forward until a student is no longer a participant in the program. Any money left by graduating students will be added to the general fund for special purposing.

### **What is Pennies for Piccolos? What is the Caroling Fundraiser?**

We have two major fundraisers for our band program where all students participate. Pennies for Piccolos is one and Caroling is the other.

Pennies for Piccolos is a collection drive that takes place over the summer months and ends on our last day of August Band Camp. It's a successful fundraiser for the department. All the money collected is housed in the Band ASB Account. Sections of the band compete with each other to see who can raise the most money.

On two consecutive Fridays in December, all students participate in a performance fundraiser/collection drive which we call our Caroling fundraiser. Our students perform door to door, receiving funds for entertaining during this two day event.

Parent drivers are needed for both fundraisers, please fill out your CVUSD Driver Form (May Orientation Meeting) as our success is based on having approved drivers on hand to drive our students.

### **Why are there ASB fees and where does that money go?**

Our band budget is housed in two different areas. It's housed through our boosters and housed through our schools associated student body department specifically for band.

All the money collected by the boosters and ASB go towards helping pay the expenses of the band music department. The ASB fees primarily go to all of our office needs, technology equipment, copier rental, paper products, programs, instrument/equipment purchases and repairs, all entry fees for all ensembles during the year (such as concert band, marching band, winter guard, drum line, percussion ensemble, jazz band), clinicians, placement auditions, subscriptions, equipment rentals, classroom supplies, field show expenses, car wash supplies, caroling supplies, music library purchases, circuit memberships, postage, special printing costs, chair rental, Video/DVD library school maintenance and PAC contributions, and banquet and award expenses.

### **Whom do we ask regarding band payment questions?**

The Band Booster Treasurer is the first person you should contact regarding any questions relating to your band financial account. This includes questions relating to your ISSA.

Any questions that are related to your student's Band ASB financial obligation should be referred to Mary Anne Martone in the band office. These are two separate financial accounts that you make payments to during the school year.

## **PARENT**

### **How will I find out information during band season?**

Information is given at the annual orientation meeting in May. We have "Parents Night" in August. We try to keep parents in touch with what is going on during monthly booster meetings, email notifications that are sent out and our band website: [www.tohsband.org](http://www.tohsband.org). Band event updates can be found on our calendar housed at the band website.

The majority of the performance calendar is set by May before the Academic Year begins.

### **Which board member do we contact first with booster questions?**

We want you to contact the board member that has the best connection with your wants and your needs. You can go to your class representative (Freshman/Sophomore/Junior/Senior). If you are new to the band you want to ask the Membership Chairperson. If you are a member of the Color Guard section you can go to the Color Guard VP. If you are a Percussionist, please go to the Percussion VP and if you are a Wind Musician in Band (Brass or Woodwind), you would go to the Band VP, and/or the Band President. All executive board members listed on the website are ready and willing to help.

### **As a parent, what can I do to help enhance my child's experience in band?**

The best thing you can do is come to the performances and watch your child perform. Give them a pat on the back, and praise. So they feel their participation is important to you and your family. You can also enhance your child's experience by giving them the opportunity to take lessons with a professional. They get one-on-one tutoring where a child can work on independent learning and can grow as an individual musician. The better each individual student gets, the better the band or ensemble will be. That in turn, makes for a more pleasant experience for all.

### **What is my obligation (besides financial) to the band as an adult?**

Every adult family member of a band member is also considered to be a booster. It would be great if we could have an abundance of boosters to be able to fulfill all the wants and needs and activities and support activities of our band program. The more boosters involved will lighten the load for the few who hold chair positions and/or board positions.

We ask every parent to fill out an availability form and talent form so we can have it on record and when the time arises, we can call upon you to volunteer something of your expertise for the betterment of your child's ensemble and our program.

### **What is the best way to know/keep up with what is going on in band?**

As parent and booster you want to stay active by:

1. Keeping in touch checking the website
2. Referencing the band calendar regularly
3. Attend Booster monthly meetings and any activity.

You're more than welcome to join and help out in any activity whether it be watching from the stands or participating behind the scenes to get the group ready. There is always something that a parent can be involved in.

## **PERFORMANCE ATTIRE**

### **Marching Band Uniforms?**

Marching Band Uniforms are provided to all members, both Instrumentalists and Color Guard Members for use during the school year as these uniforms are a direct result of the CVUSD Uniform Fee.

### **Alternate uniforms...what do I need to buy and when are they worn?**

The Alternate Uniform is a specific set of clothing that the students put on so we look uniform if we are not in our Performance Attire, i.e., Marching Band Uniform, Formal Concert Attire, Winter Guard Uniform, or Drum Line Uniform. It is important that we are able to be recognizable and look professional at all times.

The alternate uniform consists of a green collared "band" polo shirt, black dickie pants or black shorts, and sneakers and the black dickie embroidered jacket. Baseball caps are also given to all performers, which are worn during football games. Alternate Uniforms are used when we are traveling or when we are going back into the stands for awards. Alternate Uniforms are also used for middle school performances or public performances within the City of Thousand Oaks and surrounding areas.

Alternate Uniform Attire is ordered through our Booster Program.

**Where to I purchase my student's black pants and shorts?**

Typically we ask that you purchase dickie pants, which can be purchased at places like Tilly's or Pants Town and a variety of different places here in Thousand Oaks. Whether it is a specialty store or Department Store in the Thousand Oaks Area.

Note: Color Guard members have additional items that must be purchased, i.e., workout pants, which are ordered through the boosters.

**Concert attire...when and how do we get the tuxedos and dresses?**

Our concert attire consists of a long black dress for female students. It's the same dress for all female students and is ordered through our booster organization. The dresses are ordered and delivered through our department once sizing is completed and payment is received.

The male students wear tuxedos. We have a shop in town that takes care of sizing and ordering the students tuxedos.

More information TBA in the beginning of the fall semester.

**PERCUSSION****What is the difference between the pit, battery, percussion, and drum line?**

Members of our Percussion Program perform in a variety of ensembles, including our 3 concert bands, and marching band. Percussion students take a fall course together to perfect their skills in a percussion only class. In January, our percussion students audition on a snare, timpani and mallets for placement into one of the three concert bands. If we have an abundance of percussion students, we offer a percussion techniques class during the second semester.

All the above are terms used within our percussion department.

Percussion: Anyone that plays a mallet, drum or auxiliary instrument is part of the percussion department. Pit and Battery happen to be terms that are used to separate stationary percussion instruments from moving percussion instruments. Moving percussion instruments is something a student would wear or carry while moving. So if a student plays anything that is stationary they are part of the Pit section and student that is marching is a member of the battery section. Drum Line happens to be a term to describe the ensemble that is optional in the second semester (Spring). As a member of the second semester (Spring) Drum Line you can perform in the pit or in the battery.

## **LEADERSHIP**

### **What is the student leadership and when do the students train for leadership.**

Leadership classes are scheduled after school. Past history has shown that there are four different sessions. They are open to any student in our department that wants to be a leader and/or who wants to learn how to be a leader. Sometimes we have Freshman that state they are not ready, but want to have the experience to understand what they may be asked to do and how they can fulfill that commitment to the band program. Those four (4) after school sessions are mandatory for anyone that wants to be a leader. Once again, it is mandatory for prospective leaders to attend ALL FOUR sessions in order to be eligible for selection. These spring dates can be found on the calendar on our website.

### **What and Where is Band Land?**

Band land is an area outside the main double doors of our band room. It's a small courtyard with a couple of picnic tables; there is also a second set of lockers for any student that is in the band program. It happens to be a meeting area; it's also an area for social gatherings for any of the band members. During the two weeks of band camp before school starts, new band members find that band land is an area where they feel safe and secure, a place of comfort with their friends. Whether it be social activities or band activities, it's a great place to have a "sense of home".