



NEW STUDENT
NEW PARENT
HANDBOOK

Welcome to the Clear Springs High School Charger Band

Being a member of the Clear Springs High School Band shows your commitment to supporting music education at its finest! The hard work, self discipline and many diverse experiences encountered will provide a lifetime of great memories for both your child and you. For the rest of this school year and the beginning of next year, you will most likely have many questions about the CSHS Band. While this booklet will hopefully answer many of your questions, we know there are some we missed. We encourage you to contact the band directors at any time when any questions arise.

Our Mission Statement

The mission of the Clear Springs High School Band is to empower our students to use their minds more creatively, inspiring them to become life-long participants and supporters of the arts, so that through the uniqueness of the arts they will discover the uniqueness in themselves. Music education builds academic excellence, life skills, fosters teamwork, discipline, character, pride, and self-confidence at a crucial age which forms the springboard to even greater achievements in adulthood.

Band Boosters

The Clear Springs High School Band Booster organization is the parent group recognized by the school district to represent the band. The Band Booster group is already one of the largest parent organizations at CSHS. All parents of band students are considered members of the Band Booster organization. Anyone who does not have a child in the band may be a member of Band Booster organization through the different levels of sponsorship donations. The Band Booster organization provides vital support for the extra educational needs of the students in the CSHS Band. The directors of the Clear Springs High School Band would like to express their appreciation and thanks to the CSHS Band Booster Organization for their dedication and support. We are well on our way to accomplishing great things!

FAQ's

Q. "ONE BAND"?

A. The Clear Springs High School Band is "ONE BAND". This means that no matter what band class you are in, including percussion and color guard, the entire band functions as one unit. Percussion and Color Guard sometimes have different rehearsal schedules but the entire band plays together and stays together during all events and activities!

Q. What will my child benefit from and learn by being a part of the Clear Springs High School Band?

A. Music performance, physical coordination, self-discipline, time management, academic excellence, cooperation and consideration, teamwork, responsibility for own actions, life-long friendships, new friends, develop positive self-image, and a great group of peers.

Q. Can my child be involved in athletics and band at the same time?

A. Yes! This takes some coordination with the student, parents, band directors and coaches. Many students are able to participate in multiple sports and band. These students will learn critical time management skills.

Q. How do band students receive "double credit"?

A. Band students will receive a P.E. credit in the fall and a fine arts credit in the spring. Students in band do not have to take any other fine arts courses or P.E. courses. This leaves time in the four year high school degree plan for extra courses that other students do not have such as extra electives (i.e. theater, art, computer classes) or extra math, science or foreign language. Also, students may take extra pre-AP and AP classes (worth 5.0 grade points) and graduate with a higher GPA and be more competitive for college scholarship dollars.

Q. Can students succeed in advanced placement classes and band at the same time?

A. Yes! Most of the students in band are enrolled in AP (advanced placement) classes. Students who are involved in the fine arts usually have higher grades and higher test scores in all academic areas. These students are consistently ranked higher in their grade level than most other students. This does not mean that it is easy, but band seems to help the students learn discipline and time management.

Q. Will my child need to audition to be a member of the Band?

A. Yes! Auditions are not used to eliminate anyone from band but your child must have an audition score on file to be a member. Students will be placed in band classes based on skill level. All students and band classes are part of the marching band.

Q. Why does a student need to audition?

A. Students who enroll in band audition so that they can be placed in a band class with other students at their skill level.

Q. When are auditions?

A. If your child has not already auditioned, please contact band director Timothy Grange right away at tgrange@ccisd.net.

Q. How many bands are there and how does band placement affect a student's schedule?

A. There are three bands in this order: Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, and Concert Band. Please do not be alarmed if your printed school schedule says something different. The school district uses different names for different bands. All 10th graders in band will be double blocked. All freshmen in the Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band will be double blocked; that is, they will meet for band every day. In the spring semester, during concert season, the Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band students will meet two days after school each week until UIL Concert & Sightreading Contest. One day will be for sectionals and the other day will be for full band rehearsal.

Q. How does my child sign up for band?

A. You may sign up for any band class, however; the Band Directors will give all band assignments to the counselors. Students will be placed in band classes based on skill level after the auditions have been completed. All students and all band classes are part of the marching band.

Q. When can we see a calendar for the year?

A. A tentative calendar for the entire year has been completed. Please contact band director Timothy Grange at tgrange@ccisd.net or band booster president Debbie Simmons at cshsband@earthlink.net if you need a copy.

Q. When does the band practice?

A. See band calendar for dates and times.

Q. How do we keep up to date on the band schedule and band current events, since our kids don't tell us anything?

A. The band website is currently in the works and a web-based calendar with the most up-to-date information will be available soon for you to access. Also, e-mails will be sent out on a weekly basis concerning upcoming activities or any changes in the band schedule.

Q. When does the band perform?

A. The band performs at all football games both home and away. The band will also perform at 3 to 5 marching contests throughout October and the beginning of November. Please carefully observe the band calendar as all of these performances are required and count as a test grade for your child. Football games are usually Thursday nights from September to November and marching contests usually occur on Saturdays in October. Please do not schedule family outings or trips that conflict with this schedule as your student is a vital piece of the entire picture.

Q. Are all practices and performances mandatory?

A. Yes! Each Band member contributes a piece of the puzzle that is on display to the public each week during our season. It is important to have all of the pieces of the puzzle at rehearsal. However, there are occasions that an absence cannot be avoided (i.e. illness or school-related conflict) and the band member may be excused by the band director with proper notification.

Q. Why are there so many rehearsals for marching band?

A. There is so much music and drill to learn. It takes a lot of commitment to be the best and make it to state!

Q. How many hours a week does the marching band practice?

A. UIL rules allow for a maximum of eight hours of marching practice outside of the school day, plus warm-ups prior to games and contests. The band directors usually schedule less than eight hours of practice in case a practice runs longer than expected.

Q. Does attendance at games, contests and rehearsals affect my child's band grade?

A. Yes! Marching band is an extension of the classroom and will be graded. All rehearsals count as a participation grade and all games and contests are test grades. A "Request for Absence" form is required from absentees 24 hours in advance of any rehearsal and 2 weeks in advance of any performance. You may get a "request for absence" form from the band directors.

Q. Can parents attend rehearsals and performances?

A. Yes! Parents are encouraged to attend any and all band activities. The last 30 minutes of band rehearsal is the best time to watch because there is usually a run-through of everything the band has learned of the show.

Q. How do the students get to various performances?

A. Keeping track of every member of the band is a very serious matter. Because of potential legal issues, all students must travel to and from all events with the band on the buses!!!

Q. How does eligibility affect my child for rehearsals and performances?

A. If your child becomes ineligible due to grades they may not attend any games or contests. However, they are still required to attend all rehearsals and concerts which are part of their band grade. These activities are curricular; they are an extension of the classroom and are graded.

Q. What is a "yellow dog"?

A. This is another name for a yellow school bus. A charter bus is a greyhound.

Q. What are the main elements of a marching band?

A. The marching band consists of the winds (woodwinds and brass), percussion (battery and front ensemble) and color guard (flag, rifle, sabre, and dance).

Q. What is the battery?

A. The battery consists of the percussionists who march with drums (snare, tenors, bass drums, and sometimes cymbals).

Q. What is the front ensemble?

A. The front ensemble consists of the percussionists who do not march, who play the keyboard, mallet and auxiliary instruments directly on the front sideline below the drum major podium.

Q. What is “the show”?

A. The show is the eight minute musical marching performance. The band directors along with others who specialize in marching shows create a new show every year. The show is what the band works on in class and after school rehearsals in preparation for football game half-time performances and marching contests.

Q. How does the show progress and how is it different every week?

A. A little bit of the show is added each week until all of the music and drill has been learned. The show is performed in its entirety by UIL region marching contest. Minor changes are made to all aspects of the show throughout the season to “tweak it”. The show is always and constantly developing, changing, and evolving.

Q. What is drill?

A. Drill consists of the marching positions and formations the band makes while marching on the football field.

Q. What is a dot?

A. A dot is the student’s position on the field.

Q. What is summer band”?

A. Summer band consists of the band rehearsals that start on August 1st before every school year. Summer band is mandatory. Students who miss all or part of summer band may start the marching season as an alternate.

Q. Does a student have to come to summer band practice?

A. YES! All students must earn a starting position in the fall contest show by being at every summer rehearsal. Every year beginning on August 1st, the band begins to learn the music and drill for the fall show. Even though school starts later this year, we still must be ready and prepared to perform at half-time at the football game the first week of school. A student who shows up the first day of school without having been to August band rehearsals will be an entire month behind the other students.

Q. What happens if the student’s family will be out of town or there is some other reason the student cannot attend all August Summer Band rehearsals?

A. In the future, please do not schedule any vacations or activities during the week after August 1st. The writing as well as learning the show’s drill and music begins well before

school starts. It is a complicated geometrical problem and it is very difficult to add and subtract students without changing the look of the show. Please e-mail band director Timothy Grange at tgrange@ccisd.net as soon as possible if you have any questions.

Q. What is an alternate?

A. While every student is a member of the marching band, not all students will march at contests. Due to reasons concerning eligibility, illness and injury we must have students in reserve to fill starting positions as they become open. Alternates will also have the opportunity to challenge other members (must be the same instrument) for their spot in the show. The students who are challenging and being challenged are evaluated on their playing skills, marching skills as well as their attitude and behavior to determine who wins the starting position in contest show. All members of the band will march at games. Alternates are required to attend all contests and fill other vital roles at these events. These roles will include helping with equipment, props and numerous other activities. Band is one of the few activities that all four high school grade levels have the opportunity to compete together on the same team at the varsity level. Sometimes it takes freshman a little longer to catch up on the demands of varsity competition. With hard work and individual practice you will see your freshman child grow into and accept the level of expectation required.

Q. What is a band chaperone?

A. Chaperones are band parents who volunteer to accompany the band on trips to games, contests and concerts.

Q. Why should I be a chaperone?

A. Being a chaperone is a lot of work but it is also a lot of fun. This is an opportunity to get to know the parents of your child's friends. Also, how about not having to hassle with parking at the games as well as free admission to the games? No one ever regrets being involved in their children's activities. Every parent who has chaperoned will admit that it is really fun and educational to see the entire process of what we do from beginning to end. Parents who chaperone will discover a whole new appreciation for what it takes for their children to get ready, prepare, and perform from start to finish.

Q. I've never chaperoned before, what do I need to know?

A. Nothing. Be of sound mind and body, ready to serve, and expect the unexpected. The head chaperone will always provide instructions and someone with experience will always be available to help you.

Q. What are the chaperones' responsibilities?

A. The band director is in contact with the head chaperone weekly to discuss all chaperone issues. A great deal of time and effort is taken to ensure our children's safety. Duties for chaperones vary from event to event and are discussed at the chaperone meeting before departure. We don't sit around. Chaperones are expected to do the following: relay accurate information, do bus roll check, assist with loading and unloading equipment, refill water jugs, distribute plumes, help the front ensemble and/or props at halftime, escort students to the

restrooms and whatever else needs to be taken care of to help keep our band students safe. Please be open to any requests that come your way.

Q. How do I become a chaperone or volunteer to participate in any other Band Booster events?

A. You may sign up to chaperone for any activities that you feel comfortable with at the band booster meetings. You may also contact the Band Booster President, Debbie Simmons at cshsband@earthlink.net in regards to volunteering.

Q. Do chaperones wear any special clothes?

A. We ask that all volunteers wear a band booster polo shirt so you can be identified quickly at all band events. You may order/purchase these at the band booster meetings. You may also contact the Band Booster President, Debbie Simmons at cshsband@earthlink.net concerning band booster polo shirts.

Q. What is “Blue Wednesday”?

A. This is another name for “Money Day”. Blue Wednesday will be on Wednesday, August 8, 2007 this year. This is a day during summer band in which all band members and their parents will order/purchase/pay for all of their fees/items concerning band for the year. Examples would be marching band shoes, band shirts, band shorts, spirit items, instrument rental fees, etc.

Q. What are bibbers?

A. These are the marching band uniform pants that come up much higher than the waist with attached adjustable suspenders and fit like overalls. The uniform committee fits and hems the pants each year for each student.

Q. What are shakos?

A. Shako is another name for the hat worn with the marching band uniform at games and contests. Students carry their shakos to band events in a plastic hat box with handles.

Q. Are there any costs involved with the band uniform?

A. The Band uniform is issued by Clear Springs High School. You will be required to have a specific pair of marching band shoes, two CSHS Band Shirts and a pair of CSHS Band Shorts, all of which can be purchased on “Blue Wednesday”, August 8, 2007. These items are usually one-time costs unless they are lost or not taken care of.

Q. What is the big deal with the way I wear my shako during performances?

A. There are very high standards for the way uniforms are worn at marching competitions. This is a critical area on the judging sheets where the band could lose points if the shako is not worn properly or consistently from student to student. It is important to adjust the string correctly inside the hat so it sits on your head and does not cover your ears. Also, the hat must sit on the top of your head where if you put two fingers on the bridge of your nose, the brim of the hat will touch the top of your fingers. If you have long hair (**girls and guys**), you

will have to put your hair up with a hair tie or rubber band so your hair stays in your hat while you wear it. Hair may not touch the collar of your uniform jacket when wearing your hat. We will actually spend an entire class period adjusting our hats and figuring out the correct way to wear them.

Q. Where are the uniforms kept?

A. The uniforms are kept in the uniform room in the band hall. In order to receive their marching uniform before CSHS home games, the students must be **wearing** their marching shoes, black socks, CSHS Band shorts, CSHS Band shirt and have, **in their hand**, their marching gloves. For away games, CCISD stadium games and contests, the student must also have their garment bag **in their hand** with them. All students will pick up their uniforms before an event and return it after the event. Please arrive at all events early to facilitate checking out of uniforms. This applies only to uniform coat, pants and hats. Your child's shoes, socks, shorts, shirt, gloves and garment bag will be kept at home.

Q. What is worn under the uniform?

A. Black socks, the CSHS Band shorts, and the CSHS Band Shirt.

Q. What is the big deal with the pant length on the marching pants?

A. There are very high standards for the way uniforms are worn at marching competitions. Pant length is another critical area on the judging sheets where the band could lose points if the pants are too long causing a break in the crease. The proper pant length for marching band pants would correctly be considered as "high-waters".

Q. How is the Clear Springs High School Band Booster organization funded?

A. Funding comes from student fees, fundraising activities and volunteer grants.

Q. Does my child and family need to participate in band the fundraisers?

A. Participation in fundraising is strongly encouraged to help fund the extra educational needs of our band students and booster organization operating costs.

Q. How many fundraisers are held during the year?

A. Usually two fundraisers per year are available to participate in.

Q. What does the Band Booster organization use its funds for?

A. Funds are used for but not limited to the following: general operating costs, equipment trailer, audio visual equipment, props for marching show, charter bus transportation to marching contests, music and marching drill for marching show, color guard and drum line instructional fees, consultants, clinicians, judges, etc.

Q. What should a student wear to marching practice?

A. Summer and fall practices take place during the hottest time of year in Houston. Most practices are on the hot concrete parking lot, where temperatures may reach above 100 degrees. Students should wear shorts, light-colored shirts, hats, short socks and tennis shoes. Sunscreen, sunglasses and hats are strongly advised. Denim jeans and long pants are not

allowed. This is a serious safety issue and frequent offenders will lose points off of their grade, not be allowed to march, and lose their starting position in the contest show.

Q. What is the big deal with water jugs?

A. All students must bring their own water to marching band rehearsal. This is a serious safety issue and no tolerance will be given. Students not having water at roll check at the beginning of marching rehearsal will be sent home immediately and lose points off of their grade for that day. Frequent offenders may lose their starting position in the contest show.

Special Note: All students will order the blue half-gallon CSHS Band Water Jug on “Blue Wednesday”. Once received, these will be the only water jugs accepted at roll check at the beginning of marching rehearsal and roll check before games. Students may bring any other kind of container until then.

Q. How often do students get breaks during marching practice?

A. Band directors take frequent breaks during hot practices, sometimes as often as every ten minutes, so that students can drink water and stay hydrated. **Special Note: Tolerance for heat and humidity is greatly increased if water or “power-aid type” drinks are consumed several hours before marching rehearsal or outdoor activity.**

Q. Why are the students required to a new physical every year?

A. Students who participate in marching band receive a physical education credit for each fall season they march. Marching is more athletic than ever these days and the district needs to verify every student’s health is safe for this kind of exertion.

Q. Can we purchase our own instrument?

A. It is very common for students and their families in all sections of the band to purchase their own instruments. The directors can advise students and parents about brand names and where to purchase them. It is very common for families to purchase a professional quality instrument for high school band. When taken care of, all professional quality instruments will last for many, many years as well as retain resale value well after your child’s college years.

Q. Should students take private lessons?

A. Private lessons are not required, but most students in the top bands take lessons. There is no substitute for one on one instrumental instruction. Lessons also provide a great advantage to students in the course of preparation for region band tryouts and solo & ensemble contest. The school district contracts with many private instructors, who are mostly college students majoring in music from the University of Houston and Rice University. These are two schools have very fine music programs and attract musicians from all over the United States. Students enrolled in the CCISD Music Enrichment program pay for lessons through the district at a slightly discounted rate.

Q. Does my child need to practice outside of class and after school band rehearsals?

A. Absolutely! Students must practice outside of class and outside of after school rehearsals, especially during marching season. Class time and after school rehearsals are for putting music together from what is practiced and learned at home. At the beginning of marching

season, students need to be working on their scales and region tryout music and towards the end of marching season, students need to be selecting and working on their solos & ensembles for S&E contest coming up in February. There is no substitute for individual practice at home! This is what makes good bands into great bands!

Q. Will there a jazz band at Clear Springs High School?

A. Yes. Auditions for and rehearsals for the jazz ensemble will begin after school at the conclusion of marching season.

Q. How does UIL marching competition work?

A. Bands are rated on a scale of “I” to “V” (one to five) at the region marching contest. Bands are not ranked at the region marching contest. A band must make a division “I” to advance to area marching contest. Bands are ranked at the area marching contest and the top two bands advance to the state marching contest. One more band per five participating bands over fifteen participants at the area contest will also advance to the state marching contest. State marching contests alternate every other year with class 5A and 3A schools going to state on even numbered years and class 4A, 2A and 1A schools in odd years.

Q. What does UIL mean?

A. UIL stands for University Interscholastic League. UIL rules govern Texas intra-state competitions in marching band and concert & sight-reading. UIL requirements also govern athletic and scholastic competitions in the state. The UIL rating system for marching band is divided between music and marching with music receiving slightly more emphasis than marching. Go to <http://www.uil.utexas.edu/> for more information.

Q. What does BOA mean?

A. BOA stands for Bands of America. Marching bands from all over the country participate in BOA regionals, BOA super regionals and the BOA grand nationals competition. BOA shows tend to be more theatrical and showy than traditional band shows. The emphasis and scoring of points towards ranking is more evenly spread out through many different captions such as music, marching, percussion, color guard and general effect lending itself to shows that are more complex and creative. Go to <http://www.bands.org/> for more information.

Q. What does DCI mean?

A. DCI stands for Drum Corps International. Drum Corps is an activity similar to marching band except that there is only brass, percussion and color guard. There are no woodwinds. Drum Corps are independent organizations usually with corporate sponsors and are usually not affiliated with any high school or university. Drum corps from all over North America as well as some from Canada, Europe, and Japan travel on tour throughout the United States during the summer months competing against each other. The average age of someone who is a member of a drum corps is 18-21 years old. This is comparable to the major league of marching band. It is considered “taboo” to call a drum corps and band or marching band. The drum corps season ends in the middle of August with the DCI World Championships. Go to <http://www.dci.org/> for more information.

Q. What does WGI mean?

A. WGI stands for Winter Guard International. Winter Guard is an activity where the color guard from a high school marching band or a drum corps competes as separate competing group in the winter and spring. Winter guard utilizes the same equipment that they use in the marching band which is flag, rifle, saber, and dance. Competitions are held indoors in a gym. Each competing winter guard usually performs on a floor covering called a tarp that is painted with a design to compliment the music selection that the unit performs to. Go to <http://www.wgi.org/> for more information.

Q. What does TCGC mean?

A. TCGC stands for Texas Color Guard Circuit. This is the local Texas affiliation of Winter Guard International. Its members are mostly comprised of high schools, universities and independent units from the Houston, Austin and San Antonio areas. Go to <http://www.texascolorguardcircuit.org/> for more information.

Q. What is the band “spring trip”?

A. This is a band trip is usually in March or April. This trip is usually considered the culminating activity for the spring semester. The band will perform at a prestigious venue and the students receive both a positive learning experience and a reward for their hard work and effort. This year, we will be performing in the Meyerson Symphony Center, the home of the Dallas Symphony and Dallas Wind Symphony.

Q. Who pays for the end of the year trip?

A. Students pay for the end of the year trip which can range from \$400.00 to \$800.00 depending on where we are going. A big trip is allowed every 2 years. Next year is our big trip year. The cost of the trip is the student’s responsibility.

Q. What if my child is unable to go on the spring trip at the last minute?

A. There will be a trip cancellation policy. The Band Boosters must make trip payments throughout the year and money may become non-refundable as we get closer to the trip.

Q. How often does the band travel out of state?

A. The school district currently permits out-of-state travel once every two years.

I am sure this document does not answer all of your questions but I hope it goes a long way in giving you an overview of the Clear Springs High School Band program. Feel free to call us with any other questions you have that are not listed here. Please be checking the calendar when considering vacations and family activities. Please remember that summer band will always start on August 1st of every year. Your child is a very valuable part of our organization and we look forward to working with you and your child to make this a truly great organization!

Thanks from the CSHS Band Staff.

Timothy Grange, Director of Bands - tgrange@ccisd.net

Michael Nelson, Associate Director of Bands - mnelson1@ccisd.net