

HACKETTSTOWN HIGH SCHOOL

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# Hackettstown Tiger Marching Band 2025 Handbook

For Questions or Concerns, please contact Adam Freeman at  
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*Commitment forms located on pages 25-27 must be completed and  
returned with the first half of the marching band fee no later than June  
12, 2025*



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## **Introduction:**

Hello and welcome to the Tiger Marching Band family! The purpose of this manual is to provide both members and their families with a reference source for any information they may need during the course of a season. Although it is somewhat lengthy, you should take the time to familiarize yourself with it, as every member will be expected to abide by it. Although it is our goal to provide a comprehensive guide with every bit of information you need to get through a season, it is simply not possible to account for the multitude of situations that can arise. In the event that you have a question about the expectations and responsibilities of membership in the Tiger Marching Band, please start by consulting this manual. Then, if you cannot find the information you need, please feel free to ask the Director.

At the back of this manual you will find copies of an agreement. Please remove the agreement, complete all sections, sign and date the agreement in the spaces provided. The agreement must be submitted together with your marching band fee in order to ensure participation in the 2025 season.

## **Who We Are**

The Hackettstown Tiger Marching Band is a competitive marching band which performs at football games, competitions, field and concert exhibitions, as well as parades. The organization includes Drum Majors, Hornline (winds), Percussion section (marching and stationary), and Color Guard. The Tiger Marching Band is supported logistically and financially by the Band Booster Club, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization operated by the families of Tiger Marching Band.

Membership is open to any and all Hackettstown High School students, as well as Hackettstown Middle School, Great Meadows Middle School, Allamuchy Middle School and Warren County Technical High School students at the Director's discretion. Each season the Tiger Marching Band dedicates themselves to learning and perfecting a single field show which consists of between 7 and 9 minutes of music and field choreography. Because of the precision required to properly execute this field show to the standard of excellence for which the Tiger Marching Band has become known, there is a rigorous rehearsal schedule with mandatory attendance (discussed further herein).

## **Communication**

Throughout the season (and off-season), it will be necessary to communicate information. Whenever possible, this will be done in-person. In those cases, it is the responsibility of the members to relay any information to their families. There are several other avenues through which Tiger Marching Band information may be transmitted:

### Email

We maintain an email distribution list that is used to distribute information. In addition, student leaders or staff may seek members' individual email addresses to facilitate communication. Any email addresses obtained in this manner will be used solely for these purposes and will not be distributed to anyone outside of the Tiger Marching Band organization.

Members and their families are welcome to correspond with the Director by email. However, due to the volume of emails received by the Director, it is not guaranteed that the emails will be read, responded to, or otherwise addressed promptly. In the event that the contents of an email are time-sensitive (especially if they concern attendance) it is recommended that you speak to the Director in person before or after a function.

### Facebook and Instagram

The Hackettstown Band Parents have established a Facebook group for the purpose of distributing information as well as discussing topics germane to the organization. It is recommended that any member with a Facebook account join the group. If you have any questions concerning how to join the Facebook group, please speak with the Band Parent President or Vice President. The band has an Instagram account (hhs\_tiger\_bands). At times your child may appear on the band instagram page. If you object to this, then please speak with Mr. Freeman.

### Google Classroom

The Tiger Marching Band has a Google Classroom page which is regularly updated with pertinent band information. It may be accessed through your student's Google account. It is recommended that you bookmark this website and check it regularly for updates.

### More Communication

As always, Mr. Freeman has an open door policy. Please see him if you have questions or concerns. Email will always be the recommended main form and quickest way of corresponding with Mr. Freeman. For professional and liability reasons please refrain from using social media or personal cell phone numbers and personal emails to contact Mr. Freeman or the staff.

## Financial Obligations

Our goal is to keep the cost of participating in the Tiger Marching Band as low as possible. Hackettstown High School provides support for transportation, staff, music arrangements, uniforms for the band proper, and a portion of the price of equipment, such as instruments and necessary instrument maintenance, percussion supplies, color guard equipment, and annually customized color guard uniforms. To be successful, the Tiger Marching Band depends on families to share in the cost of these partially funded items. Thanks to Band Booster Organization fundraising and HHS, families' cost represents a small fraction of the expenditures made on behalf of each student. Should any prospective members have a financial hardship, please speak privately with Mr. Freeman about alternate arrangements.

### WHEN & HOW to Pay

The total amount to participate in the marching band is \$200. The first half of the payment (\$100) of the Marching Band fee is due by June 12, 2025 - when the Tiger Marching Band Contract is submitted. The second half of the payment is due by the beginning of band camp (\$100). All \$200 can be paid at once if you want. Because these fees are used to purchase non-returnable supplies in advance of the season, they are **non-refundable** if the student should choose not to participate. Checks are payable to "HHS Band Boosters". The Booster Treasurer will collect payments, provide receipts and forward the information to Mr. Freeman. If you need to set up a payment plan then please contact Mr. Freeman. There are discounts available for families who have multiple marching band members.

The deposit due with the commitment form for all members will be **\$200\***. This fee will cover the costs of:

- Uniforms
- T-shirts with a custom design relating to the show for all members
- Dot Books for all members and the app
- 1<sup>st</sup> set of mallets or sticks for percussionists
- Equipment and uniform maintenance
- Marching Band Staff and Volunteers
- Show Design

Members are separately responsible for:

- Wind and percussion members must provide their own:
  - Long plain black socks (at least to mid-calf)
  - Black Marching Gloves that can be purchased from Mr. Freeman
- Color guard members must provide their own:
  - Staff specified make-up
  - Hair products & accessories
  - Undergarments appropriate to wear underneath the uniform
  - Assigned dance shoes and gloves
- New Marching Shoes (should last all four years)

- Members are responsible for providing all necessary materials to participate in rehearsals and performances. These include proper footwear, clothing, and all other items discussed in the preparedness section.

Once again, if these expenditures present a hardship for your family, please contact Mr. Freeman so that he may look for assistance.

Please see the attached sheet from our Band Booster President for more information on the financial obligation.

### **Conduct/Decorum/Discipline**

The structure of the Tiger Marching Band is patterned after the quasi-military structure that has been traditionally adopted by American marching bands and drum & bugle corps (which have their roots in military organizations). At the top of the organizational structure is the Director who is responsible for making all executive decisions from scheduling to creative design to discipline. Below the director is a staff of adults with experience in the marching activity who advise the Director and instruct the membership. In addition to the staff are certain student leaders selected by the Director, including but not limited to the Drum Majors (whose roles are discussed further herein).

Because of the size of the organization and the necessity of complete unity in both preparation and performance, decorum is of the utmost importance, including respect for the chain of command. Although constructive input from the membership is always appreciated within the proper settings, insubordination is counter-productive and therefore not tolerated. It is expected that every member of the organization, staff and membership alike, will respect their role in the organization and obey the authority of those who are situated above them in the chain of command.

Although it is inevitable that certain members will become accustomed to receiving direction from certain staff members or student leaders who work closest or most frequently with them, they are expected to obey the authority of ALL staff members and/or student leaders. In the event that a member feels that a staff member or student leader is improperly exercising their authority, their concerns should be addressed to the Director.

Every member's priority should be to represent and serve the Tiger Marching Band in the best way possible at all times. The Tiger Marching Band is a high-class organization which is committed to excellence in performance. They respect themselves and others, including their competitors. Although it is impossible to enumerate everything which is or is not acceptable for a member, the following is a non-exhaustive list of Do's and Don'ts which are frequently encountered during the course of a season:

- DO adhere to any and all rules and regulations promulgated by Hackettstown High School or the Hackettstown Board of Education;
- DO obey the authority of all staff members and student leaders;
- DO be punctual and prepared for all Tiger Marching Band activities;
- DO maintain academic excellence;

- DO take steps to maintain your physical health;
- DO maintain your uniform and equipment;
- DON'T use profanity or engage in offensive or obscene behavior;
- DON'T disparage other organizations including other Hackettstown High School organizations and Tiger Marching Band competitors;
- DON'T engage in public displays of affection while in uniform;
- DON'T speak publicly or take any other action on behalf of the Tiger Marching Band organization without express permission from the Director.

*SPECIAL NOTE- Internet communications*

*All members are strictly prohibited from posting, creating, or participating in any content on the internet which has the effect of representing the views, policies, or actions of the Hackettstown Marching Band organization without the explicit permission of the Director. Prohibited activity includes, but shall not be limited to: creating web pages bearing the Tiger Marching Band name or logo; posting content which is critical of other people or entities with whom the marching band competes or does business; distributing proprietary information or materials belonging or licensed to the Hackettstown Tiger Marching Band or their staff to people or entities outside the organization (including but not limited to music and drill); posting or distributing audio or video recordings of marching band rehearsals or meetings to people or entities outside of the Tiger Marching Band organization. Violations of this policy will require the member to delete the offensive content and may result in discipline.*

In addition to violation of the rules, policies and procedures set forth in this manual, the Director reserves the right to take disciplinary measures as the result of any act or omission which negatively affects the Tiger Marching Band organization. Punishment may include, but is not limited to: Requiring assistance with administrative or logistical activities (organizing/cleaning the band room and/or equipment, moving equipment, field cleaning, bus cleaning, etc.); Extra practice before or after regularly scheduled rehearsal; Being prohibited from participating in performances; Loss of Third Quarter Privilege (see Football Game section); Being asked to leave practice; Expulsion from the marching band. In the event a member violates any school or district rule or policy, the Director reserves the right to refer the matter to school administration for discipline.

**CELL PHONE POLICY-** *Use of cell phones in any manner is strictly prohibited during Tiger Marching Band rehearsals or while in uniform unless deemed necessary by the director. If a member requires use of a cell phone during rehearsal or when in uniform, they must obtain express permission from a staff member before doing so. In the event a cell phone is used in an unauthorized manner contrary to this policy, the staff reserves the right to confiscate the cell phone until the conclusion of that day's activities (including final storage of equipment and cleanup of the band room). Cell use is permitted during rehearsals to access Google Drive, Google Classroom or the Ultimate Drill Book App.*



### **Varsity Status**

Members of the Tiger Marching Band that are in the high school are eligible to receive varsity status. In order to be awarded a varsity letter or pin, students must not have violated any of the policies in the conduct section or been involved in any disciplinary matters, have displayed good attendance and punctuality, treated all equipment and uniforms with respect, been prepared at all times, and displayed good sportsmanship.

### **Skills Assessment and Section Placement**

Participation as a performer in the Tiger Marching Band is physically and mentally demanding. As such, each member must be capable of meeting these demands. The nature of the competitive marching band activity is such that if a member is unable to perform under these conditions, they may injure themselves or others.

In order to ensure that all members are put in a position to succeed and provide a maximum benefit to the band, each and every member will be administered a skills assessment by the staff. Said assessment may consist of a formal evaluation, casual observations of the member during spring and summer rehearsals, or both. The purpose of this assessment is to determine a member's strengths, areas for improvement, and ensure their ability to participate in a way that does not place themselves or others in danger.

The Tiger Marching Band has a specific instrumentation in the winds, battery and pit, and a certain balance in the guard needed to be successful, which means that students may be asked to be in another section if the number of students interested in being in a given section is more than can be fielded. Based upon the skills assessments and instrumentation and balance needed, the staff will determine any reassignments. This includes the fact that any battery member may be required to change instruments at any time prior to the end of Band Camp at the sole discretion of Mr. Freeman, in consultation with the percussion staff.

Middle School students interested in joining the Tiger Marching Band prior to entering high school may be invited into the program should they fulfill a need of the group. All Middle School Students interested must have a recommendation from their MS Director. A commitment to the High School band is also a commitment to doing your best in your Middle School band.

## Attendance

The importance of attendance to the Tiger Marching Band cannot be overstated. Each and every performer has a specific and irreplaceable role in the competitive show. Because of that, each and every absence of a member at practice or a performance, regardless of the period of time or reason, is harmful to the group's long term success. Therefore, in fairness to each and every member of the Tiger Marching Band, we have adopted a strict attendance policy.

### Schedule-

The Director has issued a schedule prior to the issuance of this manual, which has been slightly altered. An updated copy of the schedule is attached to the back of this manual. It is the member's responsibility to review this schedule and alert the Director of any conflicts immediately. As set forth on that schedule, all members are expected to attend as follows:

- **ALL Rehearsals are considered mandatory**
- **ALL** events from pre band camp in August until the end of the football, competition and parade season are mandatory.
- **JULY** rehearsals are considered excused in the event of a family vacation or participation in a summer camp. If you are local you are expected to be at rehearsal.

### Excused absences-

Although every absence is harmful to the group, the Tiger Marching Band understands that there are circumstances that are unavoidable. Excused absences fall into three categories: those that require advance approval by the Director, emergency absences and necessary quarantine.

*Excused absences requiring advance approval-* absences for the following reasons MAY be excused if they are submitted to the Director at least 14 days prior to the absence: Prepaid vacation plans; commitments to other organizations such as sports teams, scouts, or community service organizations; religious services or observances; academic obligations (such as college interviews, auditions, visitations or testing).

*Emergency excused absences-* absences for the following reasons SHALL be excused if they are submitted to the director PRIOR TO THE START OF PRACTICE: illness or injury requiring medical attention or absence from school; death in the family.

*Examples of unexcused absences -* The Tiger Marching Band has the shortest competitive season of any activity in the school. As such, the priority for attendance during the intensive part of the season is high. Therefore, the following are examples of absences which are not excused: parties, routine appointments (such as dentist, hair, doctor, or orthodontist), family in town, work, babysitting.

**At the Director's discretion, an Unexcused Absence will forfeit the student's right to a performance in uniform (i.e. Football Game or Competition).**

Although a member is prohibited from performing, they are still obligated to travel with the band and assist in any manner required by the staff. Failure to do so will be treated as an unexcused absence.

In the event of an excused absence, the staff reserves the right to exclude the member from subsequent performances if it is determined that their participation may be harmful to the group.

Additionally, all unexcused absences and especially multiple offenses will affect a student's eligibility for future performances, future marching band involvement and scholarship monies allocated by the Hackettstown Band Booster Organization.

*SPECIAL NOTE- Responsibilities following an absence:*

*In the event of an absence, whether excused or unexcused, all members should expect that they have missed valuable instruction concerning their performance. It is highly recommended that members who are absent from rehearsal consult other members, drum majors, or staff to catch up on what they missed. However, the staff reserves the right to determine whether any new or revised material has been learned sufficiently prior to allowing absent members to participate in future performances.*

**Preparedness**

Attire-

Due to the physical demands of participation in the marching band, it is essential that each and every member come to practice properly dressed. The simplest way to ensure this is to ask whether what the member is wearing would be appropriate for an athletic practice. Proper footwear is essential. WEAR SNEAKERS WITH LACES. Slip-on shoes, boots, heels, sandals and/or bare feet are unacceptable. Members should also wear comfortable pants and tops; NO dresses, skirts, restrictive or overly baggy clothing. All practices are held regardless of weather conditions. Rain or shine, hot or cold, members must be prepared for the elements, however hand-held equipment such as umbrellas or fans are not permitted. It is recommended that members wear a hat or sunglasses as they may be facing into the sun. IF A MEMBER IS UNABLE TO ADEQUATELY PARTICIPATE IN PRACTICE DUE TO THEIR ATTIRE, THEY WILL BE ASKED TO CHANGE. IF THEY ARE UNABLE TO CHANGE, THEY WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO PARTICIPATE AND WILL BE TREATED AS UNEXCUSED ABSENCE.

Equipment and Supplies-

Instrument or equipment- Each member is solely responsible for bringing their instrument or equipment to practice in working order. If an instrument or piece of equipment is broken, this should be addressed before practice by either having it repaired or by seeking a replacement prior to the start of rehearsal. IF A MEMBER IS UNABLE TO ADEQUATELY PARTICIPATE IN PRACTICE BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT ADDRESSED EQUIPMENT ISSUES, THEY WILL BE TREATED AS ABSENT.

### Water-

Although the Tiger Marching Band will make every effort to provide water for members at all events, it is in every member's best interest to bring their own water and invest in a water jug. A good rule of thumb is to bring at least one liter of water for every 3 hour rehearsal block.

### Food-

Members will be informed prior to an event whether there will be an opportunity to eat a meal, and whether food will be provided for them. If they are not told that time will be provided to eat, or that food will be provided, they should assume they will not. Typically, meal breaks are only provided during events that are over 6 hours long.

### Other supplies-

Members should also bring the following to practices:

- Sunscreen
- Dot Book
- Drill
- Music
- Pencils
- Sun protection (hat or sunglasses)
- Rain Gear (No umbrellas)

## **Punctuality**

Being on time is of utmost importance. We have a very limited amount of rehearsal time. The rule of thumb all members should live by is: Wind Players arrive at least 10 minutes before posted report time; Percussion and Guard should report at least 15 minutes before posted report time. This extra time should be utilized to prepare equipment for practice and move to the practice site so that rehearsal may BEGIN when scheduled.

Because performing with the marching band is physically demanding for all members, it is also recommended that members stretch before rehearsal to avoid injury. Whenever possible, organized group stretching will be conducted by the staff or student leadership. However each member is expected to be responsible for their own physical well-being.

Practices will begin the minute it is scheduled, set up for practice will occur in the minutes before practice. If any member is late, we could add those minutes to the end of the practice. If a late arrival is unavoidable, prior notice must be given to the Director. See attendance policy for further details.

## **Travel**

By Monday of any given travel week, the details of the weekend will be available. Please check your email for updates. Bus transportation to events off campus will be provided for all band members at no additional expense. Since travel is an integral part of this organization, proper behavior as outlined in this manual as well as in the Student Handbook must be strictly adhered to.

## Student Pick-Up

We strive to stick to the printed schedule for rehearsals and competitions. For rehearsals, we usually end within 5 minutes of the printed time. Students must put things away before they leave. Students should be picked up no later than 20 minutes after rehearsal ends or we arrived back at the school from traveling. For a competition, students are told when we are about 20 minutes away from the school. They are dismissed as soon as they unload all equipment and the band room is back in order. A staff member must stay with the students until they are picked up, so we ask that students are picked up on time.

## Performances

The vast majority of performances will fall into one of 4 categories: Football Games, Competitions, Parades, and Exhibitions. All performances are mandatory and subject to the attendance policy.

### *Special Note: Spectator Etiquette*

*There will be numerous times throughout the season when the band members have the opportunity to watch other marching groups as spectators. Despite the competitive nature of the activity, the Tiger Marching Band is a class organization that respects each and every other marching organization in the world. As such, there are certain rules of etiquette when watching other groups.*

- *Do not talk when another group is performing;*
- *Do not denigrate or criticize another group when they are performing;*
- *Do not enter, leave, or move about the spectating area (typically grandstands) when another group is performing.*

*These rules apply at any and all times that a member is watching another group and visibly associated with the Tiger Marching Band. This includes situations such as attending a college football game or drum corps competition while wearing Hackettstown apparel. They apply equally to watching another group rehearse or warm up.*

### Football Games:

The Tiger Marching Band will perform at all home football games as well as several away games. Although the regular season schedule will be available long before band camp, the post-season schedule is not established until November and may run into December. It is therefore recommended that no major travel plans be made for weekends from Pre-Band Camp through mid-December.

At football games, the Tiger Marching Band is responsible for:

1. Hosting the visiting band- including watching the pregame performance, if any, and inviting the visiting band to watch the Tiger Marching Band halftime performance.
2. Playing the football team onto the field before the game begins.
3. Providing music in the stands during the 1st, 2nd and 4th Quarter - The Tiger Marching Band will be seated in a designated area during the 1st, 2nd and 4th quarter of all home games. This designated area is for Tiger Marching Band members, staff, and guest performers. All

others are strictly prohibited. The band will play music as an ensemble in the stands during the game. Individuals and individual sections are not to play anything on their own unless directed to do so by the staff. Football games are not an appropriate time to practice your instrument individually. The band members are free during the 3rd quarter of each football game as a privilege and reward for conducting themselves appropriately through the rest of the game. This privilege may be revoked as a disciplinary measure for any reason including but not limited to a failure to return to the stands before the start of the 4th quarter and/or misbehaving in the stands, incomplete dot books, excessive late arrivals or unexcused absences, disrespect of staff or members, as well as any other disciplinary issues related to conduct at organized events.

4. Performing a field show at halftime- see the competition performance section for details.

#### Competitions:

The Tiger Marching Band will typically participate in anywhere from 5 to 8 marching band competitions each fall season. These competitions are held off-campus and, sometimes, out of state. Competitions are typically scheduled on either a Saturday or Sunday. As stated above, transportation to and from the competition site is provided for all members, and details on report times and travel arrangements are posted as soon as feasible on Mr. Freeman's website and through email.

Before disembarking the bus at a competition site, all band members are to be in Full Uniform (see Uniform section for details) and have completed inspection unless instructed otherwise by the staff. Typically, the Tiger Marching Band will disembark, assemble in an orderly manner and move together to retrieve any equipment from the transport vehicles and then to a warm-up site. If scheduling allows, they will be permitted to use restroom facilities.

From the time that the Tiger Marching Band disembarks until the end of their performance, their sole focus is on preparing for the performance itself. It is therefore essential that they devote all attention to the staff at all times and obey all instructions.

Competition performances are judged in accordance with rules set forth by various competition circuits. The primary governing body for the competitions that the Tiger Marching Band attends is USBands. For additional information on USBands, competition scheduling and locations, please consult Mr. Freeman's website, the schedule provided with this manual, and the USBands website (<http://www.usbands.org>).

Following the band's performance, after all equipment is put away, the Tiger Marching Band will be permitted to watch the rest of the competition as spectators. During this time all rules of decorum and spectator etiquette apply.

At the end of every competition is an awards ceremony or "retreat". Before retreat, the host band will typically perform in exhibition. All band members must assemble in a predetermined location by the time the host band performs and remain in that location until dismissed by a staff member. During this time, the students are to follow any commands or directions provided by staff, assigned chaperone or student leaders.

When attending competitions, no member of the Tiger Marching Band is to leave the competition site's campus, and no member is permitted to go to any part of the campus alone. This serves as a safety measure in case any member is hurt or falls ill, as well as a show of unity to the other bands and spectators.

#### Parades:

The Tiger Marching Band typically performs in several parades each year which may include, but are not limited to, the Hackettstown Memorial Day Parade, St. Patrick's Day Parade, and the Hometown Holiday Parade. A special parade rehearsal will typically be scheduled prior to a parade.

During parades, the band members will proceed down the parade route in a parade block established by the staff. Each member is to maintain a performance demeanor at all times during the parade. Members shall not allow anyone who is not a member, staff member, or parent to "break ranks" or enter the parade block.

#### Exhibitions:

The Tiger Marching Band may be invited to perform in exhibition at various events. Because the type of event and performance is often unpredictable, instructions for each event will be given by the staff and must be strictly followed by all members.

### **Uniforms**

All members of the marching band will have the following responsibilities with regard to their uniforms:

#### Color Guard-

The members of the Color Guard will be responsible for purchasing the agreed upon make-up and being prepared with hair products to conform to the selected hairstyle for the season. Members will also be responsible for having undergarments that the guard staff deems appropriate for wearing under the staff selected uniform, in addition to gloves and dance shoes.

#### Hornline, Drumline, Pit Ensemble, & Drum Majors-

All members will be assigned a set of uniform pants and jacket, a shako (except pit and tubas) & a plume. All members will have to purchase a pair of black marching band shoes and wind players will have to purchase gloves. It is the member's responsibility to keep shoes clean and presentable. Gloves will be available for sale for \$3.00 per pair and must be brought to the staff's attention ahead of the time when they are needed. All members are responsible for providing their own crew length (mid-calf) black socks. *No short socks!!!*

Uniform fittings will be conducted on various dates during the summer (both at summer rehearsals and on separate dates) and at band camp. Every member must attend a fitting in order to be issued a uniform.

Throughout the season, there will be times when all uniforms will be sent out to be dry cleaned. Should a member's uniform become noticeably stained, it is that member's responsibility to have their uniform cleaned.

Unless otherwise authorized, all uniforms (pants, jackets, hats, and plumes) will be stored in the band's uniform room and are not to be taken home. Members will be responsible for obtaining and turning in their uniforms at the appropriate times. Shoes will not be stored in the uniform closet or band room.

ALL members-

Nail polish: Optimally no nail polish should be worn unless instructed otherwise by the staff.

Jewelry: No jewelry should be worn when in uniform unless it is hidden under the uniform or is small and unnoticeable (stud earrings or clear plugs) unless instructed otherwise by the staff.

Hair: Members who wear shakos must have a method for getting their hair up into the shako and off the collar of their uniform. This pertains to both male and female members with hair long enough to reach their collar. If headbands or bandanas must be used to achieve this, they must be plain black. Hair ties and bobby pins must be either the member's hair color, or black. Hair styles can be individual but may be asked to fit within the show theme.

What to wear/not wear under the uniform: Members should layer appropriately under the uniform depending on the weather. Members are not allowed to wear jeans or tanks tops/cut off sleeves (shirt must provide armpit protection) under the uniform, as they decrease the life of the uniform. Additionally, members are responsible for ensuring that none of their street clothes can be seen once in uniform, e.g. pants or sleeves sticking out, collar showing above uniform collar. All members must wear their custom show shirt that is issued as their outermost layer under the uniform.

Uniform adjustments: Should we continue to have sufficient parent volunteers, the hemming or other alteration of the uniform will be provided for each member. No members should make their own alterations to the uniform.

Marching band is a physical activity and all members should wear deodorant/anti-perspirant. This will help maintain the uniforms and keep the uniform room from getting stinky.

Drum line: should the drum line choose to wear headbands and/or wrist bands, they must all be the same, must be school colors, and every member must wear them.



## **Drill**

In addition to the musical element of band performances, there is a visual element. The primary foundation of this visual element is choreographed marching known as “drill”. The style of drill in which the Tiger Marching Band performs is created and executed by assigning each and every individual member a unique spot in the ensemble or “dot.” These dots are arranged into patterns which are charted on “drill pages” (see below). Each drill page is created to match a corresponding musical passage. A typical show can have anywhere from 40 to 80 (or more) separate drill pages.

Each member is expected to learn their individual dot on each and every drill page. Except in rare circumstances, there are no alternates or understudies to any of the marching members. As a result, if a member is not present for rehearsal or a performance, that position on the field is not performed by anyone. This negatively impacts the other members’ ability to use the absent member as a point of reference for their dots, as well as the overall effect of the visual element. These potential negative consequences are what necessitate the Tiger Marching Band’s strict attendance policy.

In order to be able to learn drill, members will be issued certain materials and required to prepare others on their own. Specifically, each member will receive one set of drill pages, and one “coordinate sheet” listing all their dots. (See below.) These items will be available for download online if the member loses their copy. However, the staff will not issue more than one copy to the student. In the event a member misses a day when drill and/or coordinate sheets are distributed or loses their previous copy, they are responsible for showing up to the next rehearsal with their own printouts of these items. They should not expect copies to be available from the staff or drum majors at rehearsal, and should contact the drum majors if they need help obtaining copies at least 1 day prior to the next scheduled rehearsal. In addition, the member will be required to create a “dot book”. (See below.) Each member is required to bring their drill pages, coordinate sheets, and dot book to each and every rehearsal, including indoor rehearsals.

### Marching Technique-

The Tiger Marching Band employs a very strict, disciplined and explicitly-defined marching technique. This technique is taught and refined during each and every rehearsal in the context of various exercises. All members are expected to learn and master this technique and the associated exercises. In the event that a member fails to do so, especially if that failure is the result of absence, the staff reserves the right to exclude that member from performances.

### Drill pages-

Drill pages are a diagram of a football field miniaturized to fit on a standard sheet of paper and divided into a grid. They are used to provide performers with the information needed to learn the drill for the show. The drill for each show typically consists of anywhere from 40 to 80 (or more) separate pages. Members will be taught how to read a drill page at band camp and/or summer rehearsals.

Each and every member is provided with a set of drill pages when they are first taught the drill. Copies of the drill pages will also be available for download. Every member is responsible for learning to read drill pages, and must bring their full set of drill pages to each and every rehearsal.

After receiving their set of drill pages, members should highlight their individual dot on every sheet for easy reference. It is also recommended that members note other information such as the shape that their section is in, the path they travelled to arrive at that page, and important field markings such as the nearest hash mark, sideline, and/or yard line(s). After this is done, members should place their drill pages in a binder, preferably with protective plastic covers to protect them from the elements.

### Coordinate Sheets-

Coordinate Sheets contain a complete list of all of a performer's dots. Performers will be provided with one set of performance sheets by the staff. If that copy is lost or destroyed, new coordinate sheets will be available for download. Each Coordinate Sheet is unique to the individual performer and will list their name, the part of the show on the sheet and all their dots. Coordinate sheets do NOT provide essential information beyond dots and count structure and are therefore NOT a substitute for a Dot Book.

### Dot Books-

A Dot Book is a small notebook which contains every piece of information that a member needs to perform the visual aspect of the show. Dot Books are essential to the process of learning and memorizing drill, as well as ensuring that every member is self-sufficient during rehearsal. Each and every Tiger Band member is required to create and maintain a Dot Book and have it on the field during every single rehearsal. Drum majors and pit ensemble members will be responsible for creating a dot book equivalent cheat sheet with the information that is relevant to them (see below). After being taught a set of drill, each member is required to enter all information for that drill in their Dot Book before the subsequent rehearsal. (For example, if new drill is taught at a Tuesday rehearsal, it must be entered into Dot Books by the next rehearsal on Wednesday.) Failure to do so may result in discipline.

The physical requirements for a Dot Book is that it have sufficient space and be large enough to contain all necessary information, but small enough to be carried by the member at all times during rehearsal without inhibiting their ability to perform. If a member will wear pants or shorts with pockets at all rehearsals, they may carry their Dot Book there. However, it is highly recommended that Dot Books be attached to a string, chain, lanyard or other item that allows the

member to hang it around their neck or waist, or over their shoulder. Every member should also bring a pencil to every rehearsal so that they can add information to or revise their Dot Book.

With the exception of the drum majors and pit ensemble, each member must have the following information in their Dot Book for each and every page of the drill:

- Page Number
- Count Structure (both move and hold counts where applicable)
- Measure Numbers and Rehearsal Letters
- Coordinate (Dot)
- Drawing of Basic Shape (member and section)
  - Without a drawing, members do not have necessary information regarding their spatial relationship to others. This includes things like knowing whether the shape is boxy, angular or curved, what the spacing is to those around them, and how steep or shallow their portion of the form is.
  - Should a student develop an alternative notation system that gives them all of this information, then they may discuss it with the visual staff drill writers to see if the drawing requirement can be waived in their case.
- Special Instructions (facing, poses, body visuals, choreography, horn angles, center of body vs. foot on dot).

Drum majors and pit ensemble members must have the following information in their Dot Book equivalent cheat sheet for each and every page of the drill:

- Page Number
- Count Structure (both move and hold counts where applicable)
- Measure Numbers & Rehearsal Letters
- Special Instructions

It may also be helpful for members to add:

- Dress
- Foot Placements (minus 1)
- Miniaturized copies/transcriptions of the music

*SPECIAL NOTE- Electronic Dot Books: With advances in technology come new resources for marching band members. Among these are apps which allow you to easily create and access a dot book on your cell phone or other electronic devices. These apps are designed very well, are very user friendly, and extremely effective in many ways. However, as with any technology, it is important to evaluate the costs it brings along with the benefits to decide whether it is appropriate for use. We may, in the near future, consider moving to more electronic methods provided that they are more efficient and cost effective to our organization.*

## Drill Rehearsals

Drill rehearsals can easily become chaotic. They require dozens of students to be instructed by several staff members regarding all aspects of their performance. Yet, because of the short competitive season, time is at a premium and all rehearsal time must be as efficient as possible. It is therefore crucial that all band members and staff strictly adhere to the code of Rehearsal Etiquette described below at ALL field rehearsals. A single individual who refuses to follow Rehearsal Etiquette can derail an entire field rehearsal.

Each field rehearsal is typically run by a single person located on the podium, sideline, or press box. Whenever possible, this person will speak over a PA or other amplification device.

Every rehearsal is conducted one “rep” at a time. A “rep” is a distinct task that the band or a section of the band is asked to perform. It may involve anything from taking a single step or playing a single note to performing an entire song or the entire show from beginning to end. Each rep will follow a predictable pattern:

- The person running rehearsal gives instructions to the drum major on the podium
- The drum major calls STANDBY
- The drum major repeats instructions to group
- The drum major calls SET & starts rep
- Members end the rep frozen in their final position for that task
- The drum major calls CHECK
- The drum major calls ADJUST
- NO TALKING DURING CHECK & ADJUST
- The person running rehearsal calls STANDBY
- The person running the rehearsal gives information (corrections, instruction, positive feedback, etc.)
- The person running rehearsal calls FIELD
- Field staff gives Corrections/Instruction/Positive feedback
- The person running rehearsal says FIELD WRAP UP
- Field staff finishes within 10 seconds
- The person running rehearsal gives instructions to DM
- REPEAT

### *Explanation Of Terms:*

*Standby-* Members stand **SILENTLY & STILL** with feet together and await instructions or information.

*Set-* Members stand in the appropriate position to begin the next rep.

*Check-* Members maintain their performance position and use their **EYES ONLY** to determine whether they are in the proper place on the field.

*Adjust-* Members move to the proper place, using their Dot Book and stepping-off their coordinate. Once there, members resume the position they should have ended in.

*Field-* Refers to members of the staff who are located at field level with the performers.

## **Music Rehearsals**

Music Rehearsals can be run by The Band Director, any member of the Staff or the Drum Majors. Rehearsal etiquette using the terms Stand By and Set will be closely followed. We will periodically make changes to the music. Therefore, a pencil must be brought to any and all Music Rehearsals. It is the responsibility of the performer to obtain any information missed because of an excused absence.

## **Music**

Music is the responsibility of the performer. We will have ample time to rehearse the ensemble. The Staff will, at every opportunity, take the time to improve your skills, help with the rhythms, and guide you towards complete understanding of the musical book. As with any instrumental activity, it will demand some work on your part to really contribute positively to the organization. The field show music is to be memorized. We have a number of “tricks” to help with this process, however nothing compares to you spending time with your instrument. The big thing to understand is, the staff is here to help, but we do not have enough time to go over every note with each student. Individual practice will ensure our success. You are also responsible for keeping your music in a folder, or flip book. Music left in a locker, on the floor of the Band Room or any other place will be thrown away and it will be the performer’s responsibility to replace the lost music.

## **Color Guard**

### Punctuality:

Color guard members are expected to arrive 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start of any function to ensure that there is sufficient time to gather and move equipment, stretch, and consult with the color guard staff prior to each function. Every color guard member is responsible for ensuring that their own equipment is transported to and from any rehearsal or performance site. The color guard staff will bear no responsibility for this task. In the event that a member will be arriving late or leaving early, it is their responsibility to ensure that another member transports their equipment.

### Attendance:

All members of the color guard are individually responsible for learning equipment work. In the event that a member is absent (whether excused or unexcused) and misses instruction, they are responsible for contacting the staff and/or other members to learn whatever they missed. In the event that a member does not satisfactorily learn their work, they may be prohibited from a performance in order to ensure the safety of the other members on the field.

### Equipment Policies:

Members are provided with equipment (poles, flags, weapons, and other props) which are owned by the Hackettstown Board of Education, Hackettstown High School, or the Tiger Marching Band.

Members are solely responsible for the proper maintenance and care of the equipment that they are assigned. Members may be held financially responsible for any damage to the equipment beyond normal wear & tear. Only color guard members may touch color guard equipment unless explicit permission is given by a staff member. Color guard members are expected to monitor their equipment and assist in the enforcement of this policy.

#### Rehearsal Attire:

In addition to the policies set forth above for proper rehearsal attire for the general membership, color guard members should keep in mind that they must be able to: 1) handle equipment without interference from their clothing; and 2) perform any dance choreography, and should dress accordingly. It is the staff's specific experience that neither jeans nor Ugg-style boots are appropriate attire for color guard rehearsals. All color guard members must wear sneakers or appropriate dance shoes at all rehearsals. Bare feet pose a health and safety hazard and are not permitted.

#### Uniform, Hair & Makeup:

Each color guard member will be expected to purchase hair accessories and hair & makeup products as part of their uniform each season. Members should not share makeup products due to sanitation concerns. The cost of these items will be kept as low as possible. The members will be instructed on proper use of these items and will be assisted in using/applying them by the staff and other members as needed. All color guard members must be in full uniform, hair & makeup before disembarking the bus at away football games or competitions, or before leaving the band room at home events.

### **Percussion**

The percussion section will have a more rigorous schedule and at-home practice demands due to the physical conditioning associated with the additional weight of wearing a drum as well as the specialized techniques associated with the instrument. Due to the physical demand the staff reserves the right to change a member's position for the safety of him/herself as well as the rest of the ensemble. In addition, in order to have a balanced percussion ensemble, members in the battery or pit may be asked to change instruments at any time before the end of Band Camp at the sole discretion of Mr. Freeman, in consultation with the percussion staff. Since every position is vital, this decision is not a "demotion" but an opportunity to serve a different role within the ensemble. All members of the percussion section must arrive at rehearsal prepared with all necessary equipment and/or supplies. As there is a lot of equipment involved with the percussion section, percussionists should allow time before and after rehearsal to transport and move equipment.

#### Prepared means:

All music which has been assigned has already been learned. Ensemble rehearsal is not the appropriate time for memorizing or learning how to play your parts.

Equipment has been properly maintained. Sticks are taped, and any necessary instrument maintenance or repairs have been performed.

Necessary Equipment/Supplies:

Sticks/Mallets

Instrument with appropriate protection (cover)

Music binder

Drill Pages

Dot Book

Proper attire.

Equipment Policies:

Members are provided with instruments which are owned by the Hackettstown Board of Education, Hackettstown High School, or the Tiger Marching Band.

Members are solely responsible for the proper maintenance and care of the instrument(s) that they are assigned. Members may be held financially responsible for any damage to the instruments beyond normal wear & tear.

All percussionists will be provided with one set of any implements (sticks/mallets) needed to perform the show. If the implements are lost, broken, or otherwise fall into disrepair, the member is required to replace them at their own expense.

Battery instruments must be covered at ALL times except performances. If the cover becomes dirty, it is the member's responsibility to bring it home and wash it.

Any equipment maintenance or repair issues must be addressed BEFORE rehearsal. It is the member's responsibility to arrive early and inspect their equipment prior to rehearsal.

Only percussion section members may touch percussion instruments unless explicit permission is given by a staff member. Percussion section members are expected to monitor their equipment and assist in the enforcement of this policy.

**Drum Majors/Section Leaders**

Drum Majors and Section Leaders are an essential component to the success of any marching group. The Drum Majors and Section Leaders for the Tiger Marching Band are chosen before each season by the Director with the advice of the staff based upon their past performance, written applications, and an in-person audition process. The basis for the selection of Drum Majors and Section Leaders is subjective and complex, and left to the sole discretion of the Director. There is no specified number of Drum Majors who will be appointed in any given season.

Drum Majors are the student leaders of the Tiger Marching Band. During performances, their role is to lead the band into and out of the performance venue and to conduct their performance. However the majority of a Drum Major's contributions take place outside of performances. Drum Majors and often section leaders are called upon to be the liaison between the staff and membership during and outside of rehearsals. They are responsible for helping to enforce decorum at all times. In order to facilitate this, it is imperative that they be treated with the utmost respect at all times by members of the Tiger Marching Band. As such, any mistreatment or disrespect of a Drum Major will be treated with the same severity as disrespect towards an instructor.

## **Medical Issues**

A student must bring a doctor's note in order to sit out from a rehearsal. If a minor illness or injury occurs, the student may step out briefly with staff permission and then return. We follow a "15 Minute Rule". If a student needs to sit out for longer than 15 minutes, then we will contact a parent to pick them up to address the medical need. If a student isn't in school then they cannot participate in marching band that day. If a student is in school that day then they are expected to be at rehearsal. You cannot determine you are too ill to participate in marching band without talking to Mr. Freeman directly.

## **Medical Clearance**

Since marching band falls under the athletics umbrella there are some medical consent and clearance forms that are needed in order to participate.

- a. Registration on [www.FamilyID.com](http://www.FamilyID.com) to be completed no later than August 1 – this is not yet open for fall sports. We will make sure to let you know when it is.
- b. Physical Exam and Health History forms
- c. Random Drug Testing form

The Physical, Health History and Random Drug Testing forms are to be completed and dropped off at HHS office. These forms may be found on the school's website under the "Athletics" tab. (We do not yet have the date for when these must be turned in by.)



## **Hackettstown Tiger Marching Band History**

- 2024: Simulation** (USBands 1st at Nationals)
- 2023: The Tiger Club** (USBands 2nd at Nationals)
- 2022: Avatar the Last AirBender** (USBands 3rd at Nationals)
- 2021: BachStar - Rock Inspired by Bach**
- 2020: Star Wars**
- 2019: Be A Hero** (USBands Best Percussion, States 2nd place)
- 2018: Words** (TOB Chapter 10 Champions, USBands Best Percussion, States 3rd place)
- 2017: You Know My Name: Bond, James Bond** (USBands Best Percussion, States 3rd place)
- 2016: X** (Nationals Best Music)
- 2015: The Garden State**
- 2014: Shadows, Reflections and Silhouettes** (States 2nd place, 3rd at Nationals)
- 2013: Through a Child's Imagination** (States 2nd place)
- 2012: Angel of Fear**
- 2011: Polar Express**
- 2010: A Love Story by Queen**
- 2009: Zombie Dances**

## Hackettstown Tiger Band - Marching Band Contract

This contract serves as a promise that each member will display the respect, discipline, and commitment that it takes to be a part of this ensemble. Our success is dependent upon ALL, not one.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to the following:

- I have reviewed and understand the policies and procedures of the Tiger Marching Band set forth in the 2025-2026 Tiger Marching Band Handbook, and I have been provided with a copy of the 2025 Tiger Marching Band Handbook. After reviewing the TMB Handbook, the student named above has elected to participate in the 2025-2026 season and will pay the financial obligation of \$200 to participate in the marching band.
- I understand that attendance is **mandatory** for all scheduled rehearsals, performances (games, competitions, parades) and activities from Band Camp until the end of the 2025-2026 School year and agree to be at all events. Excused absences are limited to illness, death in the family, or circumstances approved **in advance** by the Director.
- I understand that everyone's time is important and will not be tardy. Rehearsal start time is the time at which rehearsal should begin, not when I should be arriving. I also understand that tardiness may result in rehearsal being extended and/or possible disciplinary action.
- I understand that failure to attend events and/or chronic lateness may result in the removal of leadership titles, suspension from performance and/or removal from the Tiger Band for the season. I also understand that absences may impact eligibility for senior scholarships.
- I understand that my uniform is an emblem of pride, and therefore I will treat it with the utmost of respect. I will properly care for my uniform, keeping it hung at all times and handled as directed by parents and/or staff. I will never swear or be disrespectful in uniform or Hackettstown gear. **At no point will a non-Marching Band Member wear any piece of my uniform.**
- I understand the Tiger Marching Band is a family. It promotes unity, pride, respect, dignity, concentration, and discipline. I will do my best to show these qualities both inside and outside of the ensemble.
- I understand that marching band is a team effort. We are only successful if the group works together. Therefore, I will leave any and all negativity or "bad energy" at the door and away from the marching band. No one individual or section is more or less important than the total ensemble and will therefore respect all members and treat others as I would like to be treated.

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Student

Date

---

Parent

Date

# HHS MARCHING BAND CAMP

**Pre camp - July 29-30 8am-1pm**

**Mini Camp - August 12-14 8am-3:30pm**

**Band Camp - August 18-21 (see times)** (times are subject to change)

**Cost: \$200 total (\$100 due on 6/12, \$100 due on 8/12)**

Make checks payable to: **HHS Band Boosters**

Send registration form **by June 12, 2025** to:

Adam Freeman  
Hackettstown High School  
599 Warren Street  
Hackettstown, NJ 07840

(OR drop off at the High School – Attn: Adam Freeman, Band Director)

## Possible Scheduling Conflicts

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent email \_\_\_\_\_

Parent name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

We are requesting that the Student named above be excused from the following practices or events listed on the calendar (any absences are deemed unexcused unless explicitly permitted by the Director):

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

*Signatures:*

\_\_\_\_\_

## Band Camp T-Shirt Order Form

Size: S\_\_\_ M\_\_\_ L\_\_\_ XL\_\_\_ 2XL\_\_\_

Scan this code to read the marching manual in full—>

