



The Montgomery Blair High School

**BLAZER PRIDE** Marching Band

BAND HANDBOOK

2025 - 2026

Raife Oldham & Edward Kirk, Directors

Drum Major, Andrew Luse

Assistant Drum Major, Janaki Katz

MONTGOMERY BLAIR HIGH SCHOOL

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# Table of Contents

Welcome Letter	1
Chain of Command	2
Volunteers	3
Attendance	4
Security	4
General Rules of Conduct	
Rehearsals	5
Performances	6
Videotaping/Recording/Photography	7
Travel/Away/Competition Performances	
7	
The Uniform	
8-9	
The Music	10
Hearing Protection	10
Instrument Policy/Care	11-12
Paperwork & Fees	12
The Blair Band and Orchestra Patrons	13
Email/Text Notifications	13
Commitment Contract	14

**Welcome to the Montgomery Blair High School Marching Band**

Congratulations on joining the Montgomery Blair Blazer Marching Band! We are about musical excellence, enthusiasm, and dedication, and we are looking forward to a fun and OUTSTANDING year together.

We have an excellent leadership team in place that is committed and working hard to ensure that the MBHS **BLAZER PRIDE** Marching Band continues to excel. As always, we will begin with the all-important MARCHING BAND CAMP! It is IMPERATIVE that all students attend the Band Camp period of instruction. This summer activity is **mandatory for all members**. We need to be completely prepared for our first performances during the first few weeks of school! Check the calendar on the marching band webpage for exact dates for performances and rehearsals!

I look forward to meeting everyone – students and parents alike – and to a great marching band season!

Go Blazers!!

Sincerely,  
Mr. Oldham

# Chain of Command

## 1. Directors

**Mr. Oldham and Mr. Kirk**

The Directors are in charge of the overall administration of all visual and musical aspects of the Band. The Director is also responsible for teaching pre-game music, halftime music, pep band music, marching fundamentals, and drill.

## 2. Drum Major and Assistant Drum Major

**Andrew Luse, Drum Major**

**Janaki Katz, Assistant Drum Major**

The Drum Major is the right hand to the directors. The Drum Major conducts the Marching Band at parades/football games and assumes limited control and general discipline of the band in certain situations. The Drum Major will be the first student to arrive at each rehearsal/parade/football game to help the band directors with setup.

## 3. Captains

Captains are responsible for overseeing the cohesion and uniformity of musicality and marching across their assigned disciplines. Captains report directly to the Drum Major and work directly with Section Leaders to ensure that each section stays up to speed.

## 4. Section Leaders

Section leaders are responsible for ensuring that all members of their sections are meeting the musical and marching requirements put forth by the directors. Section leaders report directly to their captain and work directly with the individual membership of the BLAZER PRIDE.

## 5. BLAZER PRIDE Band and Color Guard Members

You are the backbone of the Marching Band. It is *YOU* who will determine whether this will be a great band. You are the future leaders.

### **Volunteers**

We are always seeking student and adult volunteers to help during the marching band season with uniform fitting and distribution, equipment, water, and transportation. Please contact Mr. Oldham or Mr. Kirk if you are able to help.

## Attendance

In order for the Marching Band to function efficiently, it is important that we use our time together to the fullest. Dedication is evidenced by your attendance at rehearsals, performances, and school-related events. The time that we have *together* to practice is critical...and we don't have that much of it. **It is expected that all students will arrive promptly for all scheduled events and will have warmed up and be prepared for the start of each event.**

The following attendance policy will go into effect on the first day of band camp and applies to all Marching Band rehearsals, performances, football games, parades, and special events:

**1) Unavoidable Absences.** If you know in advance that you won't be able to attend a performance or rehearsal, you must notify Mr. Oldham or Mr. Kirk at least one week before the scheduled activity. An absence will be considered excused if:

- \*There is an immediate medical emergency;
- \*There is a death in the family;
- \*The student has a personal illness;
- \*There is a significant family responsibility (wedding, graduation, etc.);
- \*Unavoidable academic/school related conflict at Montgomery Blair High School.

*\*If at all possible, please let us know when an **emergency** occurs ASAP*

**2) Students must bring a note signed by their parents/guardians no later than one full week prior to missing the scheduled event.** An email from the parent/guardian is also acceptable.

**3) Three unexcused tardies, unexcused absences, leaving early, arriving unprepared, or any combination thereof will be grounds for immediate dismissal from the Marching Band.** Being consistently tardy or absent from rehearsals and performances impedes the flow of the band's progress and negatively impacts the morale of the organization.

**4) In the event that a student belongs to an organization not related to MBHS that might be rehearsing or meeting during the same time, please consult with the directors.**

**5) Students who are employed outside of school and whose schedule might conflict with Marching Band related events should consult with the directors IMMEDIATELY.**

**6) If the football team goes to the playoffs and finals, we may be asked to perform.** In this event your attendance is **mandatory**. Playoff schedules will be determined at a later date. Students will be notified as soon as the directors receive information from Mrs. Boulé and/or Coach Nosoff.

**7) Each student is expected to come to every rehearsal and every performance prepared and ready to participate to the fullest of their ability.** Any student who comes to a rehearsal or performance and does not actively participate may be subject to disciplinary action. Students are considered “not prepared” and “participating” if they forget their instrument; don’t have a reed, mouthpiece, sticks, mallets, or flags; don’t have their music; or don’t have the correct shoes or socks for marching. (Students who have medical excuses or verified instrument repair issues will be exempt from penalty.)

**8) SSL Hours** will be awarded for the students’ participation in marching band. A full breakdown of the SSL Hours schedule will be posted in a separate document. As previously stated, students are expected to be present for BAND CAMP, all rehearsals, and all performances. Contest/Competition attendance is absolutely mandatory and non-negotiable, except in the cases of personal or family emergencies.

### **Security**

Unfortunately, there are some people in our community who are not honest. Because we have valuable equipment and leave our personal belongings in the band room when we go outside to rehearse or perform, everyone **MUST** take preventive steps to ensure the safety of personal property:

- 1) **ALWAYS** take your instrument home to practice and use the provided combination lock to secure personal items in the provided lockers.
- 2) **ALWAYS** lock your purses, wallets, keys, cell phones, MP3 players, backpacks, and any other valuables in your music locker when they will not be under your direct supervision.
- 3) **KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN.** If you see anyone who is not in the marching band hanging around the classroom, report it immediately to the directors or the Drum Major.
- 4) **REPORT UNLOCKED LOCKERS** to the directors or the Drum Major.
- 5) **KEEP A RECORD AT HOME** of the serial number(s) of your instrument.
- 6) If you discover that the last person to leave the band room didn’t lock a door (front, back, uniform closet, or instrument closet), tell the directors or the Drum Major.

# General Rules of Conduct

## Rehearsals

In order for us to conduct efficient marching band rehearsals, students should make sure that they do the following:

1. Be in the right place, at the right time, with the right equipment. *Early is on time, on time is late, and late is left.*
2. Bring the following items to all rehearsals:
  - a. Instrument
  - b. Music
  - c. Drill Sheets
  - d. Pencil
  - e. Water Bottle
3. Dress comfortably and appropriately for all rehearsals. Appropriate clothing for rehearsals includes: t-shirts, shorts, sweats, and laced tennis shoes with proper arch support – **NO Sandals, boots, etc. Students will be dismissed from rehearsal for being dressed inappropriately, resulting in an unexcused absence. NEW to the 25-26 season: Students may NOT wear athletic shoes that cannot be laced (example: adidas Lite Racer Adapt 7.0) or any laced shoe that does not provide proper arch support (example: converse).**
4. Remain silent unless spoken to directly. Comments and questions are welcome and will be recognized when students raise their hands to be called on.
5. Rehearse the way you would perform. Students should look to their section leaders and captains for examples of proper instrument carriage, horn angles, etc. Section leaders and captains should ALWAYS be setting the example.
6. Give the same respect to all people who may be conducting a rehearsal, whether it's the directors, the Color Guard Instructor, the Drum Major(s), Captains, or Section Leaders. Respect yourself and respect each other.
7. **Clean up the rehearsal space. All students should assist in caring for equipment and maintaining a clean music facility. No food or drink (except water) is allowed in the band room during rehearsals. One section of the band will help strike the field/band room after every rehearsal and event.**
8. **Come to rehearsals with a positive attitude.** Positive and negative attitudes are contagious.

*\*Any student exhibiting a negative, demeaning, or undermining attitude towards staff, parents, students, members of the Montgomery Blair High School Marching Band, or community members attending performances or events will be subject to permanent removal from the group. Such violations may result in a conference with the Director, Parent/Guardian, and appropriate school administrator(s).*

# General Rules of Conduct, Cont.

## Performances

1. **DO NOT BE LATE.** Times to be ready to rehearse before a game, competition, or other performance will be announced prior to the event. In instances where the band must ride a bus, ALL students must be on time for departure. Students who are not on time for departure will be left and must have a parent bring them to our performance venue.
2. **March to and from the stadium with pride.** Our performance begins as soon as we start to march to the stadium or get off the bus for a parade or competition. The performance does not end until the directors or the Drum Major dismisses us. *Do not let anyone outside of the band cut through the ranks of the parade block.*
3. **Students MUST be present at the Friday afternoon rehearsal** before a home football game in order to perform in the pre-game and halftime shows at the game that evening.
4. At home football games, students will **play in the stands during ALL 4 quarters of the game.**
5. At away football games, students will **play in the stands during ALL 4 quarters of the game.** Students may have halftime to relax and watch the opposing team's band perform!
6. **Students MAY NOT eat or drink in your uniform, except for water.** Accidents will occur unexpectedly that may soil, stain, or permanently damage the uniform. Students will be instructed at performances as to when it is appropriate to remove the band jacket and get something to eat or drink.
7. While at a performance it is imperative that students **sit with their designated sections.** This not only makes us look good, but it is also crucial in maintaining a well-balanced and consistent sound.
8. Students may play **ONLY** the part on the instrument that they have been assigned. **DO NOT exchange instruments with anyone else once we've left the band room.**
9. At home football games, students **must stay on the home side of the field. The same rule applies for away games** – stay on our side (visitor side) of the field.
10. Do not lean or sit on anything that will soil, tear, or snag the uniform.
11. There are to be **no visitors in the stands during a football game.** Only MBHS Marching Band members, parent chaperones, and instructors are allowed in the band's stands. This is important from the standpoint of your safety. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

## Video and Audio Recording/Photography

Videotaping of practices and performances is a valuable instructional tool both for the instructors and the performers that will be utilized throughout the season.

Reviewing videos enables the instructors to make effective and necessary adjustments for future performances. It allows performers to see how the band looks as a group and also how their “piece” fits into the “whole.” Without sitting in the stands, a videotaped recording is the only way performers can see a clear picture of the effects created by the drill they have learned.

The practice of videotaping is not unique to the marching band. Sports teams, dance teams, and theater groups often use this important tool.

*Unfortunately, due to time constraints, the entire band cannot view every videotaped practice/performance.*

Videotaped performances, recordings, and photographs may also be used for recruitment purposes.

Parent/Guardian/Marching Band members understand and agree that their likeness, voice, and/or performance may be shown/printed in newspapers, magazines, on the Internet, on CDs, on DVDs, on videotape, on television, or other media by Montgomery County Public Schools and its assigns for all purposes of education, instruction, or public information, with or without the use of the student’s name.

If you are interested in or are able to videotape or photograph performances of the marching band, please contact Mr. Oldham or Mr. Kirk.

## Travel/Away/Competition Performances

Times and schedules provided in advance at rehearsals/via email and/or the Google Classroom are tentative and are assigned by the host. Occasionally, schedules are provided or modified by our host with short notice. It is important that we are able to adjust our schedule to meet these changes.

Because of unforeseen late schedule changes, all Marching Band members should not schedule any other events on the day of the travel/away performance.

All Marching Band members are **required** to ride on the provided transportation. For safety reasons, students may not travel in their own vehicles without the written permission of their parent/guardian.

While at away performances, the Marching Band must stay together as a group at all times. For safety reasons, students **may not leave the group** at any time unless accompanied by a chaperone.

**Regarding marching festivals and competitions:** ALL students are expected to be present and perform at such events. Aside from emergencies, students will **NOT** be excused from competing.

# The Uniform

All students in the Montgomery Blair High School Marching Band will be issued a uniform at the beginning of the season. This uniform is designed to identify members of the MBHS **BLAZER PRIDE** Marching Band as a unique and distinct group representing MBHS. The uniform is **always to be worn in its entirety and with pride**. STUDENTS WHO COME TO ANY PERFORMANCE WITHOUT ANY PART OF THE UNIFORM WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE.

## *How to Wear the Uniform*

### Wind and Percussion Members:

1. Students will be responsible for purchasing gloves and the white Drill Masters brand marching shoes at the beginning of the season.
2. Students will be responsible for purchasing a Marching Band t-shirt to wear to school on game days and beneath the uniform (*Student Info form*).
3. Students must wear the required Marching Band t-shirt and your own shorts beneath the uniform at all times. Students may wear long-sleeves/pants underneath the uniform – when the weather gets colder. Any extra clothing must not be visible while the uniform is being worn.
4. The bib pants must be worn with suspenders up at all times.
5. The jacket must be worn as designed with zippers in the front at all times.
6. The shako (hat) must be worn so that the brim is “two fingers” up from the nose. All hair, real or otherwise, must be kept up inside the shako. This applies to ALL wind and percussion students.
7. The plumes will be distributed by section leaders before each game/performance and will be collected by section leaders at the conclusion of each game/performance.
8. Tuba players will wear berets instead of traditional hats with their uniform or no head gear at all.
9. Students must wear the Drill Masters shoe at all times with the uniform – NO SNEAKERS.
10. Students must wear white calf-length socks with the uniform.
11. All wind players must wear a pair of white gloves with the uniform. Woodwind players may cut the fingertips off of the gloves for ease of playing.

### Color Guard Members:

1. We will be issuing you a tunic that will be worn at all performances throughout the season.
2. Guard members will be responsible for purchasing jazz pants to be worn under the tunic.
3. Guard members will be responsible for purchasing gloves and shoes at the beginning of the season.
4. Guard members will be responsible for purchasing a Marching Band t-shirt to wear to school on game days (*t-shirt order form*).

☐ **Uniforms will be stored in the closet at MBHS at all times**, EXCEPT when there are performances outside of school over the weekend (ex. parades and competitions).

☐ Uniforms will be issued before each event and collected immediately following each event by the **student Uniform Managers and parent volunteers**.

☐ Students are responsible for their own uniform. Inspect it often. Students should immediately report any problems with uniforms to the Uniform Managers. If a student damages any part of the

uniform through his or her own negligence, that student will be billed for any needed repairs, replacements, or additional dry cleaning. Students will be billed the full cost of the uniform due to failure to return it, or if it is lost.

☐ **Marching Band members are NOT allowed in the uniform closet** – only the uniform managers have permission and access to the uniform closet.

*\*\*All MCPS/MBHS rules regarding use of school property apply. Although appropriate behavior is always expected, it is much more so when the uniform is worn. Poor behavior and inappropriate conduct not only reflect on the offending individuals, but also on the entire ensemble, school, and community.*

## The Music

We will be playing the following songs this year in Marching Band:

### *Memorized*

#### **Warm-Up**

and Chorale

#### **Parade/Pre-Game**

Fight Song

Star-Spangled Banner

Alma Mater

Drum Cadences

#### **Halftime Music**

Marian: The Lady Hood of Sherwood Forest

### *Not Memorized*

#### **Pep Band**

Stands music

If you have any problems with your music, please go directly to your captain.

**DON'T FORGET A LYRE AND A FLIP FOLDER!!**  
**You can purchase these at your local music store.**  
**THEY ARE REQUIRED!!**

## Hearing Protection

A Drumline rehearsal can produce a sound great enough to damage your hearing after just 5 minutes a week! Adding in the rest of the Marching Band shortens the amount of time before damage occurs. Because of this, hearing protection is highly encouraged.

To learn about real hearing protection, visit [www.etymotic.com](http://www.etymotic.com). The Etymotic high-fidelity ER-20 ETY-Plugs are ready-fit and do not require custom ear molds. You can buy a pair of clear earplugs, a neck cord and a case directly from the Etymotic web site for as low as \$13.99. For another dollar or two you can order the earplugs and neck cords in your choice of a variety of different colors. The website also has information about custom musician's earplugs. ER-20 plugs are also available for purchase on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). The Home Depot and Lowe's have similar products for just under \$5.00.

## Instrument Policy/Care

- The Montgomery Blair High School Instrumental Music Department will provide the following instruments from its existing inventory at no cost to its members: mellophones, baritones horns/euphoniums, sousaphones/basses, tenor/baritone saxophones, marching percussion, and auxiliary accessories for the field show such as flags, poles, etc.
- The Instrumental Music Department may also have a limited supply of other band instruments for its members to use. Check with Mr. Oldham about the availability of an instrument. **You will be required to complete a Receipt and Bond Form for Band/Orchestra Instruments (MCPS Form 334-13) when issued an MBHS instrument.**
- Members of the marching band are required to supply their own mouthpieces, reeds, valve oil, mallets, and other supplies.
- Members of the drumline will be charged for broken heads on their school-issued equipment.
- If an instrument is accidentally damaged at a rehearsal or performance, the student(s) involved must inform his/her section leader and the directors immediately so that the appropriate repairs can be made. It is *requested* that the student/family drop the instrument off at the repair shop, pick it up when it is done, and pay for the cost of the repair. Mr. Oldham will give you the names of MCPS authorized repair shops. If the cost to repair the instrument creates a financial hardship, please see Mr. Oldham.
- If an instrument is **maliciously or carelessly** lost or damaged, **the student(s) who is/are at fault will be charged** for either the repair to the instrument or the purchase of a replacement, if necessary.

- Proper care of all instruments (personal and school owned) during the marching season is essential. It is impossible to present a high-quality musical performance on an instrument with stuck slides, bad pads, sticky valves, split reeds, or chipped mouthpieces. Any questions or concerns about instrument care and maintenance can be brought to the directors, captains, or the section leaders.
  
- Check-in of all borrowed instruments will occur during the final week of the marching band season. Instruments must be returned in good working order, as issued.

### **Paperwork & Fees**

#### Things that need to be turned in to Mr. Oldham **before** Band Camp:

- ☐ General Information Form
- ☐ Health History Form
- ☐ Shoes/Gloves Order Form
- ☐ **Band Fee** – Each student will be assessed a band fee of \$100 to help cover costs of guard uniforms and flags, percussion sticks and heads, props, and bus rental for competition. Should this create a financial hardship for the student, please see Mr. Oldham privately ASAP.
- ☐ Notification/Permission Form for Field Trips
- ☐ MCPS Form 560-31
- ☐ Signed Commitment Contract (*Last Page of this Packet*)

***If you did not receive any of these forms, please check online to access them!***

## The Blair Band and Orchestra Patrons

The Blair Band and Orchestra Patrons (BBOPs) are composed of parents and guardians of Montgomery Blair Instrumental Music students. As our Booster organization, the BBOPs' goals are:

1. To support the goals and objectives of the Instrumental Music Program.
2. To assist the teachers, staff, and students with administrative and logistical support when requested.
3. To help promote a positive image of the Instrumental Music Program throughout the community.
4. To provide financial support for the Instrumental Music Program.
5. To foster communication between the Instrumental Music teachers, music students and parents.
6. To foster parental involvement and support of students in the Instrumental Music Program.

□ The BBOPs meet once a month at 7:00 P.M. in the Instrumental Music Room at Blair High School, Room 14. **Parental participation is important to the success of the Program!!!**

## Email/Text Notifications

We use e-mail and text to correspond and send out notifications. Please make sure to include your email address on the Commitment Contract (page 14) to ensure that you receive correspondence. The texting service is an MCPS-approved app that Mr. Oldham and Mr. Kirk use called **REMIND**. This app allows the directors to send out mass messages to the band and parents. The intent in using this app is so that short messages can be sent out and received immediately.

# Commitment Contract

I have read and understand the Montgomery Blair High School BLAZER PRIDE Marching Band Handbook and agree to abide by and consent to the rules, regulations, attendance and videotaping/recording/photographing policies and procedures. I have reviewed the rehearsal and performance schedules and my parents or guardians will notify the directors at least one week in advance if I cannot attend a scheduled Marching Band activity. I understand that I am agreeing to participate in all marching band activities for the entirety of the 2025-2026 school year, beginning Monday, August 11, 2025 and ending Wednesday, June 17, 2026.

Student Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Instrument: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address(es) for Listserv Notifications: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\*PRINT, SIGN, AND UPLOAD THIS CONTRACT TO THE FORM LINKED HERE\*\***