

# **JAMES HUBERT BLAKE HIGH SCHOOL "ROARING BENGALS" MARCHING BAND**



## **2025-2026 HANDBOOK**

*Last Updated 6/14/25*

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*MARCHING BAND GOOGLE CLASSROOM:*

*<https://classroom.google.com/c/Nzg3MzAwNzIwNjky?cjc=bdthlamp>*

*Follow us on Instagram: @blakeroaringbengals*

*Join our Facebook community: search for "Blake Music"*

## **Introduction**

Welcome to the James Hubert Blake High School "Roaring Bengals" Marching Band! Whether you are an untried freshman, an experienced senior, or anything between, this promises to be an exciting and productive year for the Roaring Bengals.

As in any other musical ensemble, our primary goal is to provide an outlet for both musical expression and personal growth. In the Marching Band, though, we take that goal one step further by putting the music in motion to create an experience that is both aurally and visually stimulating to our audience.

For those enrolled in a Marching Band class, this course is designed to give the student an enriching and diverse instrumental music education. This class provides a number of performance opportunities for the student in a variety of settings. The daily objective of the course is to foster and promote musical growth through the playing of a musical instrument by the student. As a member of the band program, group effort and cooperation is necessary to a successful program. Band is a skilled effort in which each student is expected to show technical and musical growth throughout this course.

## **Leadership Team**

The Blake High School Marching Band relies on a structured chain-of-command. The organizational breakdown of the Marching Band, from top to bottom, is as follows:

- **The Directors** – The Directors are responsible for the planning and execution of all Blake Marching Band activities. Their goal is that all activities will promote the growth, development, and well-being of the Marching Band and its membership.
- **Staff Members** – Throughout the year, various adults will come in to assist the Directors in the instruction of marching technique, musical/routine readiness, and performance practice. All staff members have been selected by the Directors for their wealth of knowledge and experience, and should be treated as professional consultants.
- **Drum Majors** – The Drum Majors are the head student leaders of the Marching Band. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, conducting the Marching Band at all performances, rehearsing the Marching Band, meeting with the Directors and Staff Members on a regular basis, and completing any other tasks assigned by the Directors. The Drum Major are selected each Spring, through audition, by the Directors.
- **Captains/Section Leaders/Student Staff** – Captains, Section Leaders and Student Staff are chosen by the Directors, and are responsible for assisting the Directors, Staff Members, and Drum Majors in musical and visual instruction, as well as the logistical and non-musical components of the band. Captains and Section Leaders are also responsible for fostering morale, spirit, and discipline within their sections. Captains, Squad Leaders and Student Staff are typically those members of the band who are not only the best musicians and marchers, but also the best leaders.

## **Email & Google Classroom**

It is important that the Directors have accurate email addresses for all students in the Marching Band and their parents/guardians. Please be sure to register for Marching Band with email addresses that are checked on a regular basis. Also, students should make note of the Google Classroom and Remind join codes on the cover of the handbook and join as soon as possible. It is highly recommended that parents activate the parent access feature on Google Classroom and join. The Google Classroom app can be downloaded to phones for ease of access. Google Classroom will be the primary method for providing music and drill charts.

## **Rules and Regulations**

To ensure the success of the Marching Band, please ensure that you are following all the rules listed below.

1. The structure of the Leadership Team is provided to students so that they know who to take instructions from, and who to talk to when an issue arises. It is the responsibility of all students to follow any instructions given by members of the Leadership Team. It is also the responsibility of those in the Leadership Team to respond to concerns of those below them in the chain in a timely and appropriate manner.
2. Students are expected to follow all rehearsal and performance procedures as outlined later in this handbook, or as explained by the Directors, Staff Members or Drum Majors.
3. All parts of the school campus should only be used under the supervision of a Director or Staff Member. Students are encouraged to schedule sectionals outside of normal rehearsal time, but those sectionals must be approved in advance by a Director.
4. **At no time is food or drink allowed in the Music classrooms, except for water that is in a closable container. Any exceptions must be pre-approved by a Director or Staff Member.**
5. To facilitate the cleanliness and organization of the Music area, students should remove anything that has been brought into the Music area by the end of rehearsal. Bags and cases should be stored in their proper locations at all times. During rehearsals students should have nothing at their chairs except what they need for rehearsal. This policy also applies to the outdoor rehearsal and performance areas.
6. The Director's office is off-limits to all students, unless permission to enter is granted by a Director or Staff Member. Students should knock and wait to be invited into the office before entering.
7. Use of the telephones, computers, printers and copiers in the Music area is limited to emergencies and music-related business only. Students must have the permission of a Director or Staff Member to use any of this equipment.
8. A space in the Instrument Storage Room will be provided to each student who needs it. This space is for music-related items only. It should not be used as a spare locker. All members of the Instrumental Music program, both student and instructional, will share responsibility for the security of this room, and therefore should respect the property of others who use the room. Only those who participate in the Instrumental Music Program, and their parents/guardians, are allowed in the Instrument Storage Room.
9. To help ensure the security of the Instrument Storage Room, and its contents, all instrument cases must be clearly marked with the owner's name, and all instrument serial numbers must be registered with the Directors. Cases should be stored in their assigned areas at all times.
10. Each member will receive their own copy of all Marching Band music, and drill charts will be made available to any student who wants them. Additionally, each student should already have certain equipment and supplies as outlined by the Directors. It is each student's responsibility to have all these materials at every rehearsal. Loss of any items that were provided by the Directors will result in a fine which will be reported as an obligation to the Blake HS Business Office.
11. Each member will receive a marching band uniform. **It is the responsibility of each member to care for the uniform according to the published guidelines.** Fines for uniform damage will be assessed and reported to the Blake HS Business Office. Accessories to complement the uniform (such as shoes, gloves, and polos) will also need to be purchased before the first performance.
12. Percussionists will be held responsible for the organization and maintenance of all percussion instruments and the areas in which they are kept. Color Guard members will be held responsible for the organization and maintenance of all color guard materials and the areas in which they are kept.
13. Rules may be added or changed at the discretion of the Directors. All members will be made aware of rule changes as they are made.

## **Rehearsal and Performance Procedures**

1. Members will be made aware of rehearsal start times and performance call times. Members will also be made aware of meeting places for each rehearsal and performance. Members must be at the designated place before the designated time with all needed equipment. Tardiness will be dealt with as outlined in the attendance policy.
2. At each rehearsal you should have your instrument/equipment, music, drill charts/dot book, a pencil, appropriate hydration and clothing appropriate to the weather.
3. Members should take advantage of the time before rehearsing or performing by going through an appropriate warm-up procedure.
4. At no time will a member play an instrument or use a piece of equipment that he/she is not assigned to.
5. Each member is responsible for the maintenance of his/her assigned equipment. This includes proper assembly, usage, function, upkeep, and storage. Questions about proper equipment maintenance may be brought to a Director or Staff Member.
6. All members should observe silence when a Director, Staff Member, or Drum Major approaches the group to begin a rehearsal or performance. Questions may be addressed after a member raises their hand and is recognized by the person running the rehearsal or performance.
7. It is expected that all members will show appropriate respect to all Directors, Staff Members and student leaders. Members are also expected to display a positive, hard-working attitude at every rehearsal.
8. **Unless given different instructions by a Director, the entire uniform must be worn at all times during performances. When in uniform, no jewelry may be worn and hair must not touch the neck. No additions or alterations may be made to the uniform without prior approval of the Directors.**
9. **Be careful about what and how you eat and drink when you are in uniform.**

## **Class Enrollment & Grading Policy**

All students at Blake HS in the Marching Band must be enrolled in an Instrumental Music class. Ideally, woodwind and brass players enroll in Wind Ensemble A (Marching Winds); Percussion students enroll in Concert Band A (Drumline); Color Guard students enroll in Color Guard A.

Assessments: Performance-based assessments will take place during the class period. Students will always be given advance notice for any assessment.

Performances: The Directors will provide students with performance dates with ample time to make adjustments to their schedules. Performances will be a heavily graded aspect of the class. **All performances are mandatory and may NOT be re-assessed!**

## **Attendance Policy**

It is important that every member show a certain level of commitment to the Marching Band by being present and on-time at every rehearsal and performance. However, it is understood that circumstances arise that are beyond anyone's control.

In order to have an absence or lateness excused, a signed letter must be presented by the member's parent/guardian **before the absence or lateness is to occur (ideally at least two weeks)**. In lieu of a letter an email may be sent to the Director, **but only from an email address that belongs to the parent/guardian**. The letter/email must state the affected dates and the reason for absence or lateness. Once the letter/email is submitted the Directors will review it and decide whether the absence or lateness is excused or unexcused. (The Directors' guidelines will generally follow MCPS and Blake HS policies for excused absences and tardies.) The Directors will then notify the member of their decision.

If circumstances prevent a letter/email being sent before the absence or lateness is to occur, then a message should be left on the music office phone (240-740-1364) as soon as possible, and a letter/email must be presented before the next rehearsal or performance that the member attends.

**If you are enrolled in a Marching Band class, your attendance during class and evening rehearsals, as well as performances, has a direct effect on your grade. Marching band is a performance-based course. Please consult the calendar for all practice and performance dates, and plan accordingly. Even if absences are excused, students will be expected to complete a make-up assignment.**

It is important to note that, in order to participate in activities after the school day, a student must be present for at least four classes during the day. It is absolutely critical that students are in class on days when there are marching band activities after school.

**Remember: To be early is to be on time. To be on time is to be late. To be late is to RUN!**

### **A Word Regarding Marching Band and Other Extracurricular Activities**

With very few exceptions, many students through the years have been able to balance their commitment to the Marching Band with other activities offered both in and away from the school. The Blake Marching Band staff is committed to working with students who participate in other activities to allow for an enjoyable experience for everyone involved, but this commitment must be reciprocal.

Most importantly, students who wish to participate in other activities during the Marching Band season must be able to coordinate their various commitments, and communicate with the Directors as soon as potential conflicts arise. While every effort will be made to work with students with other obligations, please understand that the well-being of the ensemble must be everyone's first priority. There will be times when a student will have to make a choice between Marching Band and another activity, but all other avenues will be exhausted before a student is asked to make that decision.

### **Middle School Student Policy**

Membership in The James Hubert Blake High School Marching Band is open to those students in middle school who will be entering seventh or eighth grade for the current season and who will enroll at Blake High School for ninth grade.

**Participation in the Marching Band is not an alternative for participation in the Instrumental Music program at the middle school.** All middle school students who participate in the Blake HS Marching Band must also be members of their school's Instrumental Music program. Exceptions to this rule must be approved by the Instrumental Music teachers at both Blake High School and the respective middle school.

Students who choose to take advantage of this special opportunity must make an extra effort to stay informed of any updates and news as it pertains to the Marching Band.

### **Transportation After Rehearsals/Performances**

The vast majority of the work that we do in the Marching Band takes place outside of normal school hours. The Directors are committed to providing accurate start and end times to families, and to adhering as best as possible to the published schedule.

While we all understand the importance of arriving on time, it is equally important that students are picked up on time at the end of a rehearsal or performance. Many times the Directors and Staff Members have other professional and/or personal obligations to attend to after a Marching Band rehearsal or performance is finished. However, the Directors also have an obligation to make sure all students are safe until they are picked up.

It is expected that students are picked up within 15 minutes after an event has ended. When a student has not been

picked up more than 20 minutes after an event has ended, Montgomery County Police will be contacted to supervise the student until the student is picked up.

### **Uniform Information**

James Hubert Blake High School is fortunate to have a professional set of customized uniforms for students to wear. The Marching Band also utilizes alternate uniforms for less formal settings. While the most important part of producing a quality group is sounding its best, it is also important for the ensemble to look its best. With that in mind, all students will adhere to the following dress code for every performance, unless given advance notice otherwise by the Directors.

**Students who arrive at a performance without the proper uniform will not be allowed to perform, and their grade/merit point status will be adjusted as appropriate!**

There are several pieces to the Marching Band uniforms, and these pieces must last for several years. It is imperative that students take special care of their uniforms. Some uniform parts are provided by the school, while others will be purchased and kept by the student. Damage to school uniform parts due to negligence and/or misuse will be repaired/replaced at the expense of the student.

#### **Uniform parts for Woodwinds, Brass and Percussion provided by the school**

- Uniform Jacket
- Uniform Pants
- Hanger
- Shako with box and plume
- Uniform bag

#### **Uniform parts for Color Guard**

*Note: Depending on the nature of the halftime show, color guard members may receive multiple uniforms over the course of the season.*

- Uniform tunic
- Uniform pants
- Overcoat
- Hanger
- Uniform bag

#### **Uniform parts that must be purchased through the Music Department by all members**

- Marching Band shoes, referred to as "Dinkles." Used Dinkles are available at a discounted price.
- Show t-shirt which will be used both as an alternate uniform and as the shirt worn underneath the uniform jacket.

#### **Uniform parts that must be purchased on your own**

- One pair of closed-toed athletic shoes for rehearsals and informal performances.
  - **ONLY ATHLETIC SHOES AND DINKLES ARE ALLOWED TO BE WORN AT ANY MARCHING BAND REHEARSAL OR PERFORMANCE!**
- Tall black socks (at least 4" above the ankle) to wear with the uniform
  - Winds and percussion only
- Optional: gloves for the colder weather rehearsals and performances.

#### **Proper Use & Care of the Uniform**

- Be mindful of what you eat and drink in uniform. The uniforms need to last about 15 years!
- When in uniform, you are representing the whole band, and often the whole school. A good rule of thumb: Before you do or say anything uniform, imagine that one of your directors is standing next to you. If you wouldn't do it or say it with a director next to you, then don't do or say it in uniform! This includes cursing, PDA, and disrespect!
- When hanging the uniform, make sure you fold the pants at the seam.
- ALWAYS WEAR BLACK SOCKS AND YOUR SHOW SHIRT WITH YOUR UNIFORM!

### **Other Items To Be Purchased On Your Own**

These are all items that are necessary for participation in the Marching Band. All members are expected to have these items by the beginning of Marching Band Camp.

- Several pencils.
  - Each member is expected to have a pencil at all times during all rehearsals!
- 1" 3-ring binder (Squad Leaders, Section Leaders, Captains, Drum Majors)
  - Carries your drill and extra music for the year
- A lyre for your instrument.
  - Lyres can be purchased at any local music store.
  - It is recommended you take your instrument to the store with you to ensure that you get the right lyre for your instrument.
  - Lyres cost between \$5.00 and \$10.00 each, depending on your instrument.
  - Color Guard members and percussionists do ***not*** need to purchase a lyre.
- Two flip-folders to hold your music (one for pre-game & halftime, and one for stand tunes).
  - Flip folders can be purchased at any local music store.
  - Flip folders cost about \$5.00 each.
  - Make sure all of your flip folders are labeled with your name!
  - Color Guard members and percussionists do ***not*** need to purchase flip-folders.

### **Tips for a Successful Marching Band Season**

- Always be prepared for rehearsals and performances! This means having all necessary equipment, and always having a pencil.
- Dress appropriately. Marching Band is as much a sport as it is an ensemble. For rehearsals, wear light and comfortable clothing, and **never wear sandals!** For performances, be sure you have all parts of your uniform.
- Remember that the Staff Members are here for your benefit. Most of them are offering their services for very little compensation (and sometimes free of charge) because they want to see us succeed. Always treat them with the same amount of respect that you would want given to you.
- Do your part to keep up on organizational matters. Get forms and permission slips signed and returned in a timely manner. Get your money in on time. Bring any issues to a Director as soon as possible!
- When at a performance, remember that you are representing not only the Blake HS Marching Band, but also the whole school and Montgomery County. Show self-control, attentiveness, maturity, and proper manners at all times.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions or give suggestions! We all are here to learn. Our door is always open for questions, comments, and concerns.
- Encourage your family to get involved. The Blake Music Boosters contribute greatly to the success of the Marching Band. Among many other things, parents can attend our performances, contribute money to the program, and provide logistical support.