

The Unofficial Guide for “Rookie” Unicorn Marching Band Parents



2020-2021

Mighty Unicorn Band & Guard Boosters

This is all the stuff we wish we would have known when we were rookies, to make the transition to high school marching band easier.

What's So Great About Marching Band?

Ask 100 parents this question, and you'll get 100 different answers.

Band will build your child's self-confidence. It provides a great friendship network. It will provide your child with a sense of pride and accomplishment after working hard, and giving a great performance, in front of a pumped-up stadium full of fans.

Being a member of the Mighty Unicorn Band will give your child a valuable educational and social experience. They will work hard and experience many triumphs, as well as some setbacks and disappointments. These are all things that will build grit for the "real world" and life after high school.

The transition from middle school band programs to high school band programs is huge, and this is especially true for marching band. Expectations are increased, but so are the rewards.

Marching band usually starts at the beginning of August, with long rehearsal days. But walking into the Ninth Grade Center on the first day, after bonding with marching band practice members, will make the transition to high school much easier.

You will have many questions about the marching band program at New Braunfels High School. This guide will show some of the finer points of making the most of your four years as a band parent, and hopefully, will answer many of the questions you have. If you have questions that are not answered in this guide, please contact any member of the Unicorn Band Boosters.

Congratulations, and welcome aboard!

Who's Who?

Student Leadership Team

Leadership within the Mighty Unicorn Band is a privilege bestowed upon those students whose actions and behavior have demonstrated a high standard of discipline and maturity as individuals, and a dedication to the success of the band.

These students have made a commitment to make the band the best it can possibly be. Student leaders are expected to assist the Band Directors, as requested, and to lead by example throughout the year.

Drum Majors – These students are the lead conductors of the band. Once “rookies” just like your kids, they are now upper-classmen and conduct the band during the marching season.

Section Leaders – The band has different components. Each of the components has student leaders, who help rehearse small groups of students.

Staff

Head Band Director – David Eckert is our “Head Coach.” He is responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the band program, including hiring and supervising consultants, assisting with the Booster program and educating our children.

Assistant Band Director – Kyle Day is Mr. Eckert’s right hand.

Assistant Band Director – Craig Turner oversees percussion, which includes the drum line and pit ensemble. He primarily works out of the high school.

Assistant Band Director – Jorge Flores oversees our freshman bands, and shares his time between the Ninth Grade Center and the high school.

Color Guard Director – Kate Williams is a proud graduate of the Unicorn Band Program. She brings a wealth of experience within the high school and collegiate arenas.

Consultants – These are extra staff hired by the director to improve the band and work with the percussion and guard. Think of them as “Assistant Coaches.”

The Essence of the Mighty Unicorn Marching Band

The Unicorn Marching Band is a group activity, and teamwork is the essence of what makes it a great program.

It is important for parents to understand that, while your child is very important, the director and staff assistants must also consider the best interests of a program with many other students. Sometimes, your child will receive critical feedback, as well as positive feedback. It is all necessary to the success of the program.

There are several character traits that every member of the NBHS Marching Unicorns must adhere to:

Pride – To instill in each band member pride in their talent and in their band. You get out of it what you put into it.

Unity – To build an intense desire to belong to a dedicated team.

Success – To reap the internal benefits of hard work, practice, discipline, and teamwork.

Respect – To promote respect within the band and the band members for themselves, each other, and for their equipment.

The New Braunfels Mighty Unicorn Marching Band has a long history of great traditions, pride, and excellence. All band members are required to be a part of the marching band.

This ensemble performs at:

- All NBHS football games and pep rallies
- UIL marching competition
- One or two other marching competitions
- Other invitational events, such as parades and community performances

Time Commitment

Without a doubt, marching band is a huge time commitment. Marching band requires 100% participation at the two-week-long summer band camp, rehearsals twice weekly, Friday night home and away football games, Saturday competitions, and marching in parades. There is an average of eight hours of rehearsal each week during marching season.

Time Requirements

All camps, rehearsals, and performances are **mandatory**. If your child is absent or unable to play/march/perform their part, it will have a negative impact on the efforts of ALL the other students. To put the best musical product on the field, the director and staff need all members present and prepared, each and every time.

During most weeks during the fall, your child will have one or two days without marching band. Arrange doctor's visits, family trips, etc., on days that your child does not have marching band rehearsals or performance. Conflicts must be discussed with the director in advance.

Time management is a key to success in marching band and in life. This may be the most important skill your child acquires as a member of the Mighty Unicorn Marching Band.

New band students learn quickly that they must use every minute of their day wisely. Your student will learn how to keep a schedule and how to set priorities. Be patient. It may take a few weeks for "rookies" to get the hang of it – but they will.

Your child will also become punctual. They will be taught the meaning of "**Band time**":

"If you are early, you're on time. If you're on time, you're late. If you're late, you're in trouble."

If Band Camp starts at 8 a.m., that does not mean arrive at 8 a.m. It means your child should be **READY TO REHEARSE** at 8 a.m., with appropriate clothing, footwear, instrument, water, etc.

Grades: Educational research has shown that the discipline and focus developed in marching band carries over into the classroom. You will often see students in the band room reading and doing homework, in between rehearsals.

Granted, students who struggle with time management may have a harder time balancing band and academics, but many "rookie" members can find informal tutors amongst older band students to help them with tough subjects. Marching band is a UIL activity, and students must be passing in all courses in order to participate.

Band Lingo! Learn It!

Shako – hat worn during competition

Plume – feather adornment

Gauntlet – the cuff that is placed at the bottom of uniform sleeve

Dinkles – marching shoes

Mellophone/mellophonium – marching French Horn

Sousaphone – type of tuba used for marching

Percussion – any striking instrument, not just drums

Auxiliary/Color Guard – dancers, flag throwers, spinners, sabres, rifles, and baton twirlers

Front Ensemble/Pit – the non-marching percussion positioned on the front sideline

Pit Crew – volunteers that assist loading and unloading pit instruments at games

Battery/Drumline – the percussionists that march on the field

Adjudicators – the judges at competitions

Flip books – small index card booklets that hang off your shoulder, which the band writes their dots in

Dots – your band child's position coordinates during certain points of the field show

Water jugs – a key component to healthy and successful band practices in Texas. Please remind your students that is imperative that they keep these clean and well-identified. This means bring them home occasionally to wash. They can get moldy!

Chaperone – Best seats in the house. You will escort the band members to their seats and make sure no one walks through the band seating area. You will have a free bus ride to the away games, and will not have to pay for admission at either the home or away game that you chaperone.

Unicorn Band Boosters

The parent arm of the NBHS Band Program. The band boosters are a non-profit volunteer parent organization that serves the NBHS Bands staff and **students** by providing the financial and volunteer support needed to maintain a high-achieving organization to enhance and enrich the students' educational and performance experience. All band parents are automatically invited members of the NBHS Band Boosters.

Parental and Family Involvement

1. Give your child support and encouragement for being in band! Tell him/her how proud you are of what they are learning, and how they are changing from being part of the band.
2. When watching band practices or waiting for your students, get to know the other parents. Better yet, come early to watch the kids' progress and socialize with other band parents. Building relationships with other adults in the program will benefit both you and your child.
3. Come to the Band Booster Meetings! Meeting times and dates will be posted on the NBHS Mighty Unicorn Band website: www.unicornband.com. We meet monthly in the NBHS Band Hall. You'll likely always walk away with information your kids forgot to tell you.
4. Pay your band dues and fees on time. We know it's not easy, but it is important to the existence of the band program.
5. Join a committee. Volunteers are needed throughout the year, and there is a great committee assignment waiting for your special and amazing skills and background.
6. Attend football games and competitions to cheer for them! The band ALWAYS performs better with a large cheering block behind them. Season tickets are highly recommended, with new season ticket sales available over the summer. Call 830-627-6111 for more information.
7. Volunteer to chaperone. After all, you're coming to the game/competition anyway! Did we mention free admission to the games you chaperone?
8. Join our Pit Crew for performances. Not everything is heavy, and much of it is on wheels. You also gain free admission to the games when you assist during games. Not able to attend? Lend a hand at the school when you drop-off and pick-up your child.
9. Help with FUNdraisers! The more hands, the easier the work!

Patience is key. Sometimes, rehearsals might not end on time, which will have an impact on release. Please understand that it takes additional time to put equipment away after practice, especially if your child is a percussionist.

Please note that no one is allowed to be dismissed after a marching show or football game until every instrument, piece of equipment, and uniform is accounted for. This gives you a great opportunity to volunteer. Every extra hand helps. Volunteering gives you something to do, rather than wait in your vehicle.

Band Fees

But what is all this going to cost?

We are very fortunate to have amazing opportunities to offset the “price” of being a part of the marching band. You will find out how wonderful and supportive our community is when we are in the midst of fundraising.

You can expect an average of \$400 in annual fees to participate. If this is too much to pay all at once, you can make arrangements. We don't want this to get in the way of any student wanting to be a part of the band, but their expenses are real: uniforms, equipment maintenance, provided meals, competition fees. This a brief list of expenses, and with increasing cuts in public school funding, the burden of expenses falls on the students and their support system. Payment plans are available.

What Is the Operational Budget? (Available in August/September)

The operational budget includes the absolute **bare essentials**. These are the no frills, minimum expenses to operate a successful/competitive bands program, beyond basic district provisions.

- Developed using a bottoms-up approach, zero-dollar base, assessing specific program needs.
- Two-thirds of our expenses are incurred August – November.
- Cash flow is closely managed, with payments made on schedule.

The Operational Budget is funded by YOUR NBHS marching fees and fundraising!

HOW TO LEARN MORE

This is a lot of information, and no one immediately gets it at first.

Patience is key, especially at the beginning of marching season. The best way to find out about how to help is to **GET INVOLVED**.

- Attend booster meetings.
- Complete your background screens, so you can volunteer.
- Try different areas to volunteer with, so you can find your best fit.
- Stay positive.
- If you own a business or could provide in-kind goods or services, please let us know!

Don't hesitate to reach out to a band booster board member. They were all freshman band parents at one time.

2020-2021 Band Booster Board

Contact via email: unicornbandboosters@yahoo.com

President: Brandon Dietert

Vice President: Ashley Moore

Treasurer: Staci Landwehr

Secretary: Heather Harrison

Parliamentarian: Ralph Leal

You can find more information about boosters and learn how you can help support our band on the Unicorn Band website: www.unicornband.com/boosters and in the Facebook group **@Unicorn Band & Guard Boosters**

Donate via PayPal here:

unicornbandboosters@yahoo.com

