

Oakton High School Fall Color Guard Handbook

<http://www.oaktonbands.org/marchingband/colorguard/>
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Mission Statement

The Oakton High School Color Guard Program provides an opportunity for students to participate in representing their school, to grow as individuals and team members, to teach performance skills, and to build self-confidence and self-esteem.

Vision Statement

During the Fall season, the Oakton High School Color Guard will create and perform a program that rewards students for their training and development of performance qualities as a part of the Cougar Marching Band.

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MOST IMPORTANT

GOALS

1. Have fun
2. Learn new skills
3. Be competitive

RULES

1. Treat each person with respect.
2. Practice like a champion to perform like a champion.
3. There is no "I can't." There is always "I will try."
4. Breathe.

General Etiquette Rules

1. **We maintain a positive environment. Unkind words, harsh words, curse words, and profanity of any kind are not allowed at any time including outside of rehearsal.**
2. **At all times, and especially when you ARE WEARING OAKTON COLOR GUARD GEAR, you are considered a representative of Oakton High School and Oakton HS Color Guard. Act appropriately. Please see *Uniform Policy*.**
3. **You must be on your best behavior while at rehearsal and in performance venues. Making negative comments about other students, staff, parents, volunteers, or performing groups is not permitted.**
4. **Be dependable.**
5. **Be your best.**
6. **No member shall ever correct or comment negatively on another member's or section's performance. Specifically, approaching someone to give them constructive or negative unsolicited feedback is strictly prohibited. If you want to help someone, but are unsure of how to approach them, ask the staff for some pointers.**
7. **Do your color guard duties (carrying cones, guard box, music, etc.) without being asked.**

Forms

Students are required to submit:

All Marching Band Registration Forms found at <https://www.oaktonbands.org/forms>

All Color Guard Registration Forms found on <https://www.oaktonbands.org/guard>

** NOTE: VHSL Physical Form requires an appointment with your doctor, so schedule it now.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Attendance Policy

Each member plays an integral role in the color guard program. All other activities and appointments must be scheduled around rehearsal and performance dates and times. Social plans, dental/doctor/optometry appointments, jobs, group project meetings, homework, and other appointments or commitments of this nature cannot interfere with rehearsals or performances.

1. Attendance at every rehearsal and performance is **mandatory**. Attendance means arriving 10 minutes early.
2. Any absence may cause the student to not perform.
3. Communication is key. You must notify mrstrebeck@fcps.edu for all absences.
4. Excused Absence Policy
 - a. Absences will be discussed on a case-by-case basis. If a student accumulates more than two excused absences, a discussion may be held between the instructor and student to assess the absences.
 - b. An absence is excused if **both** of the following criteria are met:
 - i. The member's parent or guardian notifies an instructor one week in advance of the absence, or the member's parent or guardian notifies the instructor of a sudden, serious family emergency.
 - ii. The absence is **not** related to any of the following events or activities: social plans, dental/doctor/optometry appointments, jobs, studying, and other appointments or commitments of this nature. **Generally, if it can be scheduled in advance, you must schedule around rehearsals and competitions.**
 - c. Illness is an excused absence.
 - i. If you attend school, you must attend rehearsal unless you are contagious or too ill to observe rehearsal. We cannot stress enough how important it is for you to attend rehearsal, even if you are not able to participate.
 - ii. If you do not attend school, you may not come to practice. However, you are still required to notify the staff of your absence from school and rehearsal. We will worry about you if you are a no-show.
 - iii. The staff understands that extended absences due to illness may occur. If this is the case, the staff may choose to count your extended absence as one (1) absence, as long as you are not attending school during your illness.
5. Unexcused Absences
 - a. All other absences not addressed in the Excused Absence Policy are unexcused.
 - b. **One (1) unexcused absence**, will result in an email or phone call to the member's parents/guardians to discuss the reason for the unexcused absence and to give notice that the member has been put on *probation*.
 - c. Should a member on probation incur an additional unexcused absence, **totaling two (2) unexcused absences**, the member's ability to remain in the color guard will be at the discretion of the staff.
6. Partial Attendance
 - a. If a member has an unavoidable conflict with either a rehearsal or performance, it is highly encouraged that the member make every effort to attend a portion of rehearsal, either before or after the conflicting activity.

- b. Attending part of rehearsal will allow the member to avoid having an absence altogether, provided that the member is able to attend a significant portion of the scheduled rehearsal, as determined by the staff.

Rehearsal Policies & Procedures

1. Arriving at rehearsal “on-time” means at least 10 minutes early. *Use this time to get your equipment, change, warm-up, transport equipment to rehearsal space, review technique and choreography, and generally prepare for the rehearsal.*
2. No chewing gum is allowed at any time during rehearsal.
3. Appropriate rehearsal attire is required. You must be in rehearsal attire before practice. “Appropriate rehearsal attire” includes:
 - Comfortable workout attire
 - i. stretch pants, athletic shorts, tank tops, t-shirts, sports bras, appropriate undergarments
 - ii. No loose or baggy clothing. Ankles must be visible.
 - Gym/tennis shoes with socks
 - Hair must be completely pulled back off the face and neck and secure. Loose hair that falls into the student’s face can cause an unsafe situation when we are learning new skills. The staff recommends a tight pony tail for practice.
 - No jewelry should be worn at rehearsal or performances. Stud earrings are acceptable.
 - You must bring a water bottle.
 - School clothing attire policies will apply at all times.
4. Cell phones must be on vibrate or mute during rehearsal. You are not permitted to check your phone unless we are on a break. If you are expecting an important phone call, you may leave your phone with a staff member. If it rings, a staff member will give it to you.
5. All members must come to every practice. Exceptions are made only for those who are sick or have sudden or serious family concerns. See the Attendance Policy for further information.
6. If you are struggling, you will enlist someone to help you *outside* of practice.
7. Do not spin while staff is giving whole-group instruction.
8. Do not move or talk at the end of a repetition until you are told to “relax.” *Performance is a quality improved through practice.*
9. If the staff is working with another group that does not involve you, you should be working silently on parts of your show while paying attention in case the staff needs you.
10. There is a difference between being given time for water and being given a “break.” Time for water is short and mandatory. Breaks may be a bit longer and are optional.
11. In general, you should not take water or a break unless the entire group is permitted water or a break.
12. The staff is not the only source of information when you are at rehearsal. Please be sure to address your questions to your fellow guard members before you address them to the staff.

Performance Policies & Procedures

1. Show shirts and appropriate shorts are required on show days.
2. You may not leave the performance venue early unless you have it approved in advance with one of the staff members and the person picking you up has filled out the required form in advance. (See the FCPS forms webpage for this form.)
3. You may not go anywhere alone while at a performance venue. You must always be with another guard member. We call this “twos.” You must always be with a two.

Discipline

Color Guard is a sport of the arts, but still a sport, nonetheless. It may be necessary for the color guard instructors, band directors, or other band staff to discipline a member of the guard, just like a coach would discipline members of his or her team. Examples of disciplinary action include spins, running laps, throwing tosses, arriving early or staying late at practice, and assigning the member additional duties for the remainder of the season. In all situations where discipline is warranted, every attempt will be made to instill responsibility for his or her actions in the member and to use a form of punishment that will further enrich the member's overall color guard experience.

Technique

One of the most important aspects of color guard is having good technique. Technique is the application of methods to demonstrate skills. A color guard only has good technique if we all strive for, and achieve, the technique as a unit. The technique program used by each color guard is at the discretion of the color guard staff. How we spin in the OHSCG may be different than other schools or other instructors you have had in the past. Disagreeing with or questioning the technique of the instructors will not be tolerated. All of the instructors have spun with multiple color guards and thus have experience spinning within the guidelines of many different technique programs. We have pooled our experiences to create a technique program appropriate for the current level of the OHSCG.

Equipment and Maintenance

The maintenance and care of the Color Guard equipment is incredibly important. Equipment must be stored and cared for correctly. Equipment should never be lent out, left out, or unattended for any reason. It should be cleaned and handled with care per given instructions. Only color guard members are permitted to practice with the equipment. No member should ever allow another person to spin their equipment, even if that person participate(-s -d) in color guard during another season.

We spin 36" Elite 3 Rifles. We spin 36" sabers – the best brand is King, but Excaliburs are more affordable. We spin metal, Spanish-hilt.

Uniform Policy

To complete the look and feel of the program, performers will be given a uniform. This uniform must be treated with the utmost respect. In uniform and in your guard jackets, you are considered a representative of Oakton High School and Oakton HS Color Guard. You must be on your best behavior.

1. In uniform and in guard gear (shirts, jackets, etc.), act with dignity, grace, and respect.
2. Treat your uniform with respect.
3. You are never to be in "partial uniform." The uniform is either entirely on or entirely off.
4. You are not to run in uniform.
5. You are not to eat in uniform. You may only drink water.
6. Public Displays of Affection (PDAs) are not permitted while you are in uniform.
7. Following each performance, you must inspect your uniform for any marks, damage, or wear and tear. If there is something, you must notify a staff member immediately. They will provide instructions on how to repair it.
8. Uniforms must be laundered following each performance and prior to the next one. Laundry instructions will be provided. **Uniforms are generally fragile and will have specific laundry instructions.**

Academic & Physical Eligibility

All students must meet the Oakton High School requirements to be eligible for participation in a sport. All students must have a current (signed on or after May 1st for the following school year) physical on file with the activities office.

All students must also complete:

1. Emergency medical contact form
2. Medical (if necessary)

Staff

Our experience in color guard gives the skills required to plan, rehearse, and perform fall and winter color guard activities. The staff's overall goal is to instruct students in the development of physical skills and positive attitudes for success in the color guard program and in their lives. In order to facilitate an open relationship amongst staff, parents/guardians, and members, we have included this section which outlines the staff's responsibilities.

The staff's duties include:

- General Supervision:
 - Administer the color guard program.
 - Plan and run appropriate rehearsals to prepare for upcoming competitions.
 - Plan and run the audition process for each season.
 - Ensure students adhere to the behavior code as described in the handbook.
 - Discipline members, as outlined in the handbook.
 - Assign duties and responsibilities to color guard captains & members and evaluate their performance of these duties.
- Technical Program & Show:
 - Establish clear goals at the beginning of each season, for both individual members and the color guard as a whole.
 - Develop a technical or "basics" program that provides the tools needed to achieve the current show's vocabulary.
 - Design a show at an appropriate level for maximum achievement.
 - Order uniforms and equipment for each season.
 - Write work, including flag, rifle, sabre, and movement, as required to fill the current season's show and in line with the color guard's ability level.
 - Ensure that the vocabulary and work in the show is in line with the current technical program.
 - Constantly develop the technical program and the show vocabulary to allow the membership to achieve excellence at their current competitive level and within their abilities.
- Administrative Tasks:
 - Prepare and publish the current season's handbook.
 - Confirm that all members have turned-in a current, signed handbook & agreement.
 - Confirm that all members have a physical on file and an emergency medical form signed by a parent.
 - Communicate rehearsal and performance schedules to members and parents
 - Oversee that the correct forms for all after-school group activities are submitted.

Contacting Staff Members

Guard Instructor: Miles Strebeck, MrStrebeck@fcps.edu

Band Director: Jamie Van Valkenburg, jgvanvalkenb@fcps.edu

E-mail is always the best way to contact us. You are also welcome to speak with us before or after rehearsal.

Student Leadership

At the end of each school year, the band program accepts applications for those students who are interested in being part of the Band Leadership for the upcoming year. Our leadership students are notified at the Band Banquet in June that they will be on the leadership team the following year. As a member of the band leadership, the guard leadership must fulfill any leadership team duties assigned by the band director, staff, or drum major(s) during the fall marching band season. Guard leadership responsibilities are the same for both Fall and Winter seasons and include, but are not limited to:

- leading stretches,
- starting rehearsal if the instructors have a staff meeting or will be late due to work commitments,
- assisting the staff (in a private setting) in identifying problem areas or concerns within the show/work,
- encouraging all team members to achieve their full potential by providing one-on-one assistance to those members who are struggling and,
- being an example to other members of the color guard.

Parent/Guardian Volunteers

Engaged parents are part of the success of the program. We are in need of a variety of parent/guardian volunteers. These volunteers do the following:

- Drive students to competitions
- Chaperone students
- Operate vending booth at competitions
- Prepare goody bags for students at competitions
- Organize snacks for long rehearsals
- Transport floor/props to and from competitions
- Take videos/photos of the students
- Organize orders for t-shirts, Oakton CG bags, Oakton CG jackets
- Represent color guard interests and support music programs at OHS at Oakton Band Boosters meetings
- Send email updates to other parents
- Send email updates to other parents
- Take measurements and alter uniforms
- Organize equipment
- Take inventory of uniforms, flags and if possible, arrange for these items to be resold
- Helping students set up before show by unfolding floor and moving props

Contact the guard instructor for how to volunteer. We need the support of all our volunteers to succeed!

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Each member will be responsible for paying all pay-to-play costs. Additionally, the color guard may decide, as a group, to purchase additional personal equipment (such as bags, jackets, tshirts, etc.), these costs will be communicated to the member and his or her parents/guardians in a timely fashion and will be payable directly to the vendor. Fundraising through the band booster organization is available to guard members in order to off-set the pay-to-play costs of participating in both winter and fall guard. We also do group fundraising to support the Band and Color/Winter Guard.

The marching band sets fees for the fall season. Please see the band boosters for the financial obligation.

Fees pay for uniforms, flags, rifles, sabers, equipment maintenance, show design, instructor fees, competition registration, and other miscellaneous costs.

First time performers:

For new students, there are several other items that contribute to the spirit and identity of the Oakton HS Color Guard. These items are required for purchase:

Jacket	\$65
Bag	\$35

Returning performers:

Embroidery is \$10.

Gloves are optional. If you choose to purchase gloves, performance gloves must be nude in color. Practice gloves can be any color.

Incidental Purchases

Other items, required for participation, but not purchased by the group, will need to be purchased on an individual basis. We have attempted to create a list of those items below for your convenience. Not all of these items will be required and some are strictly optional.

- Appropriate undergarments for the uniform
- Make-up as dictated by the show design and the staff members
- Hair styling products as dictated by the show design and staff members

Fundraisers

All members will be required to participate in marching band fundraisers as dictated by band policy. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

FINANCIAL AID IS AVAILABLE! PLEASE CONTACT MrStrebeck@fcps.edu IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY IN PAYING THE FEES

SCHEDULE

The schedule for rehearsals must be flexible to accommodate for instructor availability and student availability. The most accurate schedule will be on the website at:
calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=oaktonguard%40gmail.com

Please see the marching band calendar at: <https://www.oaktonbands.org/calendar/>

Marching Band Camp starts at the beginning of August and goes until school starts. There is generally a week of full-day camp, followed by a week or two of half day camp. Please plan to take family vacations before August! The marching band calendar above will have the most up to date information and times./

All Marching Band members are expected to attend the August band practice according to the schedule below. Participation requires that all band and medical forms are on file in the band room before the first rehearsal in August.

Generally, the rehearsal schedule once school starts will be:

Tuesday, 6-8p

Wednesday, 3:30-5:30pm

Thursday 6-8p

Please set aside all Saturdays in September and October for competitions.

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE IS NOT FINAL AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE!

OAKTON HIGH SCHOOL FALL COLOR GUARD AGREEMENT

Student Agreement

I have read and understand the information presented in the OHS Fall Color Guard Handbook located on the OaktonBands.org website. By signing below, I agree to abide by the guidelines listed herein. I acknowledge that by signing below, I am making a commitment, not only to myself, but to the other members of the color guard. My fellow members will depend on me to attend all rehearsals and performances, be prepared for rehearsal, and meet all the other obligations outlined in the handbook. I understand that if I am unable to or choose to work or act in a contrary manner to the standards and expectations listed in the handbook, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, which may include my being removed from the team.

Print Student Name

Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Agreement

I have read and understand the information presented in the OHS Fall Color Guard Handbook. By signing below, I agree to support the guidelines listed herein. I acknowledge that if my student does not follow these guidelines he or she will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action which may include being removed from the team. I also agree to pay the full cost outlined in the pay-to-play costs section of the handbook as determined by the Oakton High School Band Boosters. I understand active and engaged parents are part of the success of the program.

Print Parent/Guardian Name

Signature

Date

Special Notes:

- If you do not return a signed copy of this form with both your signature and your parent/guardian's signature, you will not be allowed to participate in rehearsal.