



Salem Band Boosters Parent Handbook

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Revised – May, 2006

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Calendar Based Overview of the Band Year

May	Organizational meeting for band.	
June	<i>First installment of band camp fees (\$100) is due June 1st</i> Band practices	See page 9 See page 15
July	Sectionals (informal small group practices) Summer Music Games of Southwest Virginia (Band attends, parents attend or volunteer)	See page 16 See page 7
August	<i>Second installment of band camp fees is due August 1st</i> Band practices Band camp Band Booster meeting (the most important one of the year!)	See page 9 See page 15 See page 16, 24 See page 4
September	Band practices Football games <i>Competition fees are due September 15th</i> Homecoming events (Band Booster Barbecue – volunteers needed) Band competitions begin	See page 15 See page 17 See page 9 See page 7 See page 18
October	USSBA competition at Salem Stadium (Parent volunteers needed) Fruit and Nut Fundraiser begins	See page 7 See page 7
November	Final band competitions Football continues Band practice schedule changes	See page 15
December	Stagg Bowl practices and performance All District Band Tryouts “Holiday with the Pride” concert (some years)	See page 21
January	Winterguard and Percussion Theater begin	See page 22
February	All District Band Performance	See page 21
March	Winterguard and Percussion Theater continue	See page 22
April	Evening practices for OPUS OPUS	See page 23
May	Band Recognition Dinner	See page 7

Introduction

Welcome! You are now a parent of a member of “The Pride of Salem” award-winning Marching Band! Get ready for an exciting time.

Just who is “The Pride of Salem”? The Pride of Salem is the Salem High School Marching Band - a group of Salem High School students that work together during school and non-school hours to present an award winning musical program. The marching band competes against other award winning high school bands their size at events called Band Contests or Competitions. They usually compete in four or five contests each fall. It is important to go to areas offering a high standard of competition that will make our students strive to do their best. It is this level of competition that gives our children the skills we want them to have.

But I thought they just played at the football games? The Pride of Salem, at the football team’s request, supports the football players by attending all football games. They work together with the cheerleaders and fans to create an atmosphere of support for our players and our team. They do this by presenting the pre-game show (the National anthem, etc.), the half-time show, and the songs of encouragement and support throughout the game, win or lose.

Please remember, the football games are the football team’s competition; the Band Contests are the band’s competition. It is important that you understand the difference and therefore the importance of the band contests.

The purpose of the Band Boosters is to support the band in all they do.

Purpose of this Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to try to provide as much information as possible so that parents are more fully aware of what is involved in being a member of the “Pride of Salem”, and how parents can support their child and the program. There is a student handbook that the students and parents should read together, and understand as well.

The one area that causes the most problems and stress among band parents is simply a lack of knowledge about “What is going on?” Many times information is given but just doesn’t find its way home. Sometimes those who have been around awhile take certain things for granted while new parents are left in the dark. When things are not fully understood, people often jump to wrong conclusions and then “situations” develop.

Band Boosters Organization

The band boosters are an organization open to all band parents and other supporters of the band.

The Board of Directors makes most of the decisions regarding the Band Boosters. Officers elected by the membership are the President, Vice-president, Secretary, and Treasurer. These officers along with the Immediate Past President, and two Appointed Members, make up the Board of Directors for “Salem Band Boosters, Inc.” A Nominating Committee, chaired by the Past President, nominates persons for each elected position and those with a majority vote are elected.

There are usually four meetings of the entire membership. Only the August meeting is required by the Bylaws:

- (1) An orientation for band parents is held before the end of the year, usually in **May**.
- (2) Around the beginning of school (late August) there is a meeting to update us about the fall contests, booster fundraisers, and general band operations.
- (3) The November meeting involves a traditional indoor performance by the band.
- (4) Every other year (in years without a theatrical musical production), around the end of February a meeting is held that usually includes a performance by the “in-school” performing ensembles – the Jazz Band, Symphonic Bands, and Concert Band.

In addition to football games and contests, a band banquet is held in May to honor the seniors and recognize all band members for the job well done during the school year.

The band boosters also conduct various fundraising endeavors throughout the year to help support the band and also to keep the fees charged to participating families at a reasonable level. Running a quality band program is expensive, and the total budget includes contributions from the school system, the band boosters organization, and student fees.

Various booster duties are divided into several committees. The largest regular committees are Communications, Band-Aid, Fruit and Nuts (fundraising), Social, Concessions Sales (fundraising), and Sewing. Smaller committees handle the Phone Tree, Publicity, Videos, and Travel. Two large “special purpose” committees handle the annual Summer Music Games of Southwest Virginia (DCI) and the USSBA Southwest Virginia Showcase Competition. You need to be aware of what goes on in each committee because we are all usually involved somehow with each committee.

Committees

In order to distribute the workload and to provide for better and more efficient operation, several committees exist. Following is an explanation of those committees and their duties:

Communications (coordinated by the Band Booster President): Although information for parents is sent home with the students, the rule of thumb is that the parents rarely get the messages and rarely know what is going on. For this reason we have developed four sub-committees to assure we all know what is going on.

A. Newsletter (mailed or e-mailed). Newsletters are occasionally being e-mailed and are used to highlight band accomplishments, inform of upcoming activities, and provide other types of booster-related information. “Hard copies” of the newsletters are available upon request.

B. Band Parent Orientation (formerly Ice Breaker). This committee helps to orient new band parents and do all that is possible to help them be comfortable. The goal is to help them to know what’s going on and why. We will also assign new band parents to “veteran” band parents so you have someone to call with your questions. Those of us who have been “Rookie” parents remember what it was like not to have a clue. This group would include “8th-men” parents as well.

C. E-mail or Phone Chain. Most “need information right now” communications go out via e-mail or a phone chain (or as handouts to band students). Most band booster parents are now using e-mail, and this mode of communication works well. For those who prefer phone contacts, similar information is distributed by a phone chain also. Each phone chain participant is assigned specific families to call whenever information is to be distributed. The goal is to make all calls within 48 hours. The last person to be called must call the first person to make certain messages were sent accurately. Let us know if you prefer email, phone calls, or both. Some of us need both. The number of current information updates varies from one every couple of weeks to several per week. **Please help keep our records of your e-mail address and phone number current!**

D. Web-page. We are now using both a band website and a band booster website. These are updated frequently, especially in the fall. Posted materials include schedules, various types of useful information, and both the student and parent handbooks. **See the web addresses below.**

Band Booster Web Site and E-mail

www.salembandboosters.org
admin@salembandboosters.org

Band Director Web Site and E-mail

www.salem.k12.va.us/shs/band
jpaxton@salem.k12.va.us

What information can you find on these web sites?

Band Director Web Site: Details of daily and weekly band practices. Specific information on all school related activities. Information on band group tryouts (e.g. percussion or color guard) and other band news, including student leadership information.

Band Booster Web Site: Band booster activities, including volunteering opportunities, fundraisers, travel information for out of town events, band booster meeting information, news of the week, and lots of photos.

E. Band Hotline, 387-8187: Current band information can be obtained by calling the Band Hotline, a recorded information phone line. The Band Director updates it weekly with schedule updates and other current information. Most importantly, the Hotline is used to provide timely information when the band is traveling. Mr. Paxton uses his cell phone to update the Hotline regularly. This information can be as simple as announcing expected arrival times at the high school following Friday away football games, or more complex information regarding band competition trips. Those updates usually include updates like "we arrived safely", "we perform at 9:15 PM", "our competition results were ...", and similar items, including the all important updates on the actual arrival times at Salem High school on the return trip.

Parents: You'll use the Hotline often, so consider programming it into your phone, or memorizing it!

Band Aid Committee. The purpose of this committee is to provide for the comfort and other needs of the band as approved by the band director and without interfering with the operation of the band. It is involved with providing food and drinks for the band and other provisions as requested by the band director. The Band Boosters provide many meals for the Band members during the season. These range from lunch for the day of travel to band camp, to a midnight meal after a long day of competing at a band contest. Feeding 160 people (students plus staff) is a big job. People are needed to shop in advance for food, to make sandwiches, to make cookies, to package up meals, and to deliver the meals. The Band-Aid Committee usually meets together on Saturday before contests to pack lunches for the band members. They may purchase pizzas for away contests and make Halloween treat bags for the festival around the 31st of October.

Sewing Committee. Band uniforms need to be sized each year. Pants must be hemmed, for example. For 150 different people it is a big job, and volunteers are needed! Additionally, the colorguard uniforms often require significant sewing. And last but not least, colorguard flags must be constructed new each year, another big job. These jobs add up to a lot of sewing. Both men and women are urged to consider this service opportunity. This committee consists of two sub-committees – one for sewing flags and the other sewing uniforms and making alterations to the existing uniforms. There are many things that are involved – such as gluing, pinning, measuring – so one does not need to be an expert seamstress to help on this committee.

Summer Music Games Committee. Each summer the Band Boosters host a Drum Corps International event at Salem Stadium. With 6-8 visiting Corps, professional judges, and 5000+ fans attending, it is a big event. This event is a world class drum and bugle corps event. It is an excellent event for our students and families to see because of the level of excellence, precision, and passion at which these corps perform. People attend this event from all over the world. Tickets cost between \$10-\$20 each, and are sold through the Salem Civic Center Box Office.

A sizable committee works for months in advance arranging the various details. The committee was formerly called the Drum Corps International (D.C.I.) Committee. This event is our largest single fundraiser for the entire year. A well established plan is followed, but workers are still needed to carry out (in advance) the many steps involved. Day of event jobs are also available, from working ticket booths, to serving as ushers, to helping sell raffle tickets.

USSBA Southwest Virginia Showcase Committee. In 2005, the Pride of Salem began hosting the USSBA Southwest Virginia Showcase, a band competition in Salem Stadium. As with the Summer Music Games, a wide variety of duties are involved, both in advance and on the day of the event.

Concessions Committee. The Band Boosters run concession stands at various events at Salem High School, most notably during the basketball season. Volunteers typically work shifts of several hours. Opportunities are also available for purchasing the needed supplies, etc.

Fruit and Nuts Committee. An annual fundraiser each fall is the sale of fruits and nuts to family and friends. We sell fruit from Florida and nuts from Virginia Diner. Volunteers are needed to lead this activity, to help collect the order forms, to do record keeping, to help organize products once they arrive at a local pickup locations, and to help with transportation. This effort is a large one, so many different volunteers are needed at each stage. Planning for this event usually starts in July so that all of the materials can be given to parents in early fall. The sales usually start the first of October and run through November with delivery a week or two before Christmas. The goal is for each family to sell at least \$ 300.00 worth of nuts and/or fruit if possible. The profits from this fundraiser are a key resource allowing us to support the band.

Travel Committee. The Band Boosters seek to provide information for band families that wish to travel to "away" band competitions. This committee gathers information about the contests that the parents may need and puts together a packet. This packet will include where the contests are, directions, motels, places to eat, average expenses, etc. Sometimes discount tickets and busses are also arranged. Training for this committee is available!

Social Committee. The Band Boosters host several fun events...potluck dinners throughout the year, a dessert event at band camp, a barbeque dinner before a home football game, etc. This committee organizes such events, including the year end Band Recognition Dinner.

The Tailgate Barbeque has turned out to be one of the most popular and fun activities of the boosters. We sponsor a chicken BBQ dinner prior to one of the football games at the stadium. This one day activity involves selling tickets to friends, family and the general public, donating homemade desserts, and helping to cook or serve on the day of the event. This is a great

opportunity for parents to get to know other parents and earn some money for the boosters.

Bandwear Committee. The Band Boosters encourage parents to buy and wear "Pride of Salem" apparel to football games and band contests. It is a morale boosting activity, not a fundraiser. The committee designs, orders, advertises, and delivers these products, based on parent orders.

Publicity Committee. The Band Boosters work to place informational articles on band activities in local papers, seeking to increase community awareness of the band and band boosters. The committee also works to advertise events and fundraising activities. Media relations is a key to obtaining support from the public and from appropriate agencies in town.

Video Committee. Each year we produce videos (DVD's) of band performances and OPUS, and sell them to parents. This committee works with professional consultants to arrange the production of these "year in review" products. Parents contribute many of these video recordings.

Photos. The Band Booster web site includes photos of the band in action. All parents are encouraged to send us photos of band activities for us to share on the web site, and possibly in the year end DVD. The instructions can be found on the Photos page of the Band Booster web site. Note: We are currently using the following web site to display photos. Viewing photos is free, and high resolution prints can be ordered directly from that web site, at reasonable cost. The password for this site is announced annually.

<http://www.kodakgallery.com/salembandboosters>

Now that you've learned about all of the volunteer positions in the band booster organization, please let us know which committee(s) you would like to be on. Sign-ups for these committees will be at the Spring Banquet and in August. Signups are also available through the Band Booster Web Site. Please feel free to talk to someone from the committee of your choice to get more information. We encourage everyone to participate and we appreciate all of the support.

Finances and Costs (or how much will it really cost me?)

It takes a lot of money to finance the activities of the marching band. The school system and the Salem Band Boosters do contribute significant amounts to the overall budget. However, it is also necessary to charge fees to participating band students. Typically the total family cost for the summer/fall marching band season can be as high as \$ 450.00 per student. Here is the breakdown of costs:

Band Camp is about \$ 225.00 per student, with new members paying \$ 25.00 additional for their shoes (as do those students who need to replace their old ones.). This cost includes transportation to band camp, lodging at band camp, the practice field facility, and all meals during band camp. There is a deposit of \$100.00 due by June 1st to reserve your child's spot in the band for the fall, and the balance is due in full by August 1st – **no exceptions. (Financial assistance – see below)**

Band Contest Fees can run up to \$ 200.00, depending on the location of said contests. Payment is due in full by September 15th – again, no exceptions to this.

To give you an idea of what these contest fees pay for, here are some examples.

- Three charter buses for each of 3 or 4 contests. (Anything over 70 miles requires a charter bus according to School policy).
- Rental truck for each contest to carry equipment.
- One night lodging for the band at a motel is about \$100.00 per every four band members. The band usually spends from one to three total nights in a motel during the fall. We are looking into staying at a local high school for several reasons, cost being one of them.
- Registration at each contest. (This fee pays for judges, facilities, etc.)
- Lunches for band member at contests and some dinners.
- We also provide drinking cups, snacks, refreshments, and other comfort items as needed.

Any band member needing financial assistance for either band camp or any other band expense should go directly to the Band Director. Help may be available and is always kept very confidential. There is a limited amount of financial aid available, and students/parents need to speak with the Director by June 1st if they will need assistance. **All students must pay the \$100.00 deposit by June 1st to secure their place in the band for the fall – no exceptions.**

In addition to the above are personal expenses for such things as gloves (<\$5.00), shoes (<\$30), instruments, reeds, valve oil, drum sticks, possible instrument repair, color guard items, and a few meals while traveling. These expenses will vary a great deal from member to member.

There are also your own personal costs for parents who attend the band's performances at contests. Being at the event is probably the most important function of being a true "Band Booster". ***It really means a lot to them if you can attend.*** Tickets to contests are usually around \$5.00 - \$15.00 each. To that you should add the cost of travel plus your accommodations.

Two Separate Organizations: The Salem High School Band, and the Salem Band Boosters

The Salem High School Band and the Band Boosters are two totally separate organizations. Anything specifically involving the band or your child's participation in the band needs to be addressed to the Band Director and the School. Anything involving the booster committees and support for the band is addressed to the Band Boosters' Board of Directors. The Board of Directors (Salem Band Boosters) have absolutely no influence on how the band functions.

How does the Band operate?

To help you, as a new band parent, understand a little bit about how the band functions (or, what are they doing?) we are including the following section on the band.

Band discipline, conduct, and methods

The Salem High School Band is quite possibly one of the most self-disciplined high school band you will ever see. You will see a lot of similarity with its code of conduct and what you would expect from a military unit. Some may think that this takes a lot of fun out of it but you will have trouble finding a band veteran who rather it would be any different. The band has developed a lot of pride and self-respect in the way they operate and present themselves to others.

Units:

One of the first things you will hear about (if you haven't already) is units, a form of discipline within the band. Units are one method of developing and enforcing discipline in the band. They can be given for a host of reasons such as being late, chewing gum in the band room, using profane language during band activities, improper attitude, not doing your best, etc. Squad leaders, Generals, Fleet Commanders, and the Drum Major can give units (up to 24) to other band members. For minor offenses usually five units are given. The band director can give units beyond the 24 limit. Most often, when a band member is given units (push-ups or sit-ups) for something done wrong, that member's squad leader, general, and the drum major all must all do units as well. As you go up in rank, the number of units increase by five at each level. As you can easily see, the Drum Major will do far more units than anyone else.

Though most band members prefer pushups for completing their units, there are alternatives. They can do sit-ups, run a lap, or write sentences.

Bus Behavior:

Most new parents experience the awkward situation of waving at their child going down the road on the bus and being completely ignored. Here is an explanation that will hopefully help you feel that there is a reason for this other than you're not loved by your child any longer.

Driving a bus full of teenagers can be a nerve-racking experience even for veteran bus drivers. And usually the time of greatest need of concentration by the driver is immediately after leaving the school, while arriving at the school, and anytime there is need to park the bus. During those times the band members are at "at ease-face forward". They are all sitting at attention and do not talk or look to the side. During those times they will not wave or even look at you.

As a result of this consideration given to bus drivers, the band has received many compliments from them. Bus drivers not familiar with our band are usually amazed at our band's behavior and are very willing to drive for us again in the future. Our children's safety is most important. And your child will appreciate you understanding so they don't have to do units.

Muster:

You will see hundreds of them before your child's years are over and you will never cease to be amazed at the precision at which it is done. It is very military in appearance and though it doesn't have anything to do with discipline it no doubt is an indicator of the type of self-discipline that exists. Simply speaking, it is the band's method of coming together to take attendance and to receive information.

The way it works is for the band to assemble in lines behind their squad leader with the higher band officers standing in front facing the band. On command, the squad leaders take attendance of their squad and each squad leader reports to his general, and generals report to the drum major. It all happens in seconds and you probably never will understand what they are saying. It must be some form of military dialect. The band musters before and after everything and several times in between. This is their way of accounting for band members in a matter of seconds.

Band Leadership:

The band leadership is the group that ensures that the music program is an award winning performance. The leaders are responsible for any discipline. Leaders also put in at least one hour more per day than the individual band members. Following, in order of authority is the band leadership:

Band Director (and Assistant Director in absence of Director)

Drum Major (9 stars)

Fleet Commanders:

Gold - (8 stars); Silver - (7 stars); Bronze - (6 stars)

Generals: (wearing stars corresponding to their number)

Five Star; Four Star; Three Star; Two Star; One Star

Captains: (wear two bars)

Drum Captain, Flag Captain, Weapons Captain, Horn line Captain,
Pit Captain

Squad Leaders: (wear one bar)

Chain of Command:

The chain of command is the steps of leadership beginning with the individual band member up through the drum major to the Band Director. Your child must go through their chain of command with everything.

Your Child

Squad Leader

General

Drum Major

Band Director

It is very important for band members to follow the chain of command when requesting to be excused from band activities or asking for information.

An example of how it works is like this:

If Mary needs to be excused from a practice she must first call her squad leader. If her squad leader can't satisfy her request or cannot be reached she then contacts her general. The next step would be the drum major. If all of that fails she may then go directly to the band director. This process develops and distributes the decision-making responsibilities throughout the band. Only in very unusual situations should the chain of command be ignored or should a parent call the band director about something that should be handled by the chain of command. If at any time along the "chain" the answer is yes, then the student stops at that level.

This is a student run organization and the students in the leadership are responsible for making most of the decisions, with advice and direction by the Band Director.

Contacting the Director

Please do not feel as if you cannot talk to or contact the Director. However, there are times that it may not be convenient for him to talk to you. Please avoid (except in extreme emergencies) phoning or talking to him prior to and just after a rehearsal. His office hours are in the morning at school, and if you call the school and leave a message, he will return your call at an appropriate time.

The main reason for this is that the band tries to help its members become proactive on their own to solve their problems. Sometimes it does become necessary for the parents to get involved, and we welcome that involvement. Thanks for keeping this “student leadership structure” in mind.

Dismissal from the Band:

The simplest way to get dismissed from the band is to simply have an unexcused absence from a band practice or other scheduled activity. The rule states that if that happens, you are automatically dismissed.

Consistent improper behavior or attitude and disrespect for school property can also get a member dismissed. Once dismissed, it is necessary to request a meeting with band leadership to get consideration for restoring membership in the band, and then the decision rests with the Director. The Director makes all decisions regarding dismissal, and reinstatement. If restored, the member is placed on probationary status and any further problems could result in permanent dismissal.

For more information concerning this policy, see the student handbook.

Prior Commitments:

When a band activity is scheduled, each band member must make a commitment to that schedule. Once a schedule is provided, band members have a forty-eight hour period to determine if they have any prior commitments that would keep them from taking part in anything on the schedule. If there is one, the student must follow the chain of command to report that prior commitment.

(See Attendance Policy in student handbook)

Parents should understand this commitment and refer to the schedule when making doctor appointments, or planning other activities. The main reason for this is that the band is a unit with each member’s performance depending on the person next to them. ***Anytime someone is absent it weakens the unit.*** Learning about commitment is also an important part of learning to be a responsible person.

Band practices and activities are scheduled in such a way as to allow time for other needed things. Typically, all Wednesday afternoons and some Monday afternoons are free of band activities throughout the fall season.

Field Support:

You will notice at contests that almost all bands have a host of parents providing field support such as hauling out equipment, flag runners, etc. We don't do that, although we would in a heartbeat if the band wanted us to. The band's method is to do as much for itself as possible. Again, this teaches responsibility and gives them a more complete sense of accomplishment.

The Band Uniform:

The uniform is made up of items partly provided by the school and partly by the parents. The uniforms are usually not taken home except for cleaning.

Provided by the school:

- Hat with plume
- Uniform jacket/cape/gauntlets
- Uniform pants
- Band tee shirt (worn under the jacket)

Provided by the parents:

- Black shoes (bought through the band boosters)
- Black gloves (bought through the band boosters)
- Black socks
- Thermal underwear or sweat pants during cold weather.

Uniform Cleaning:

The cleaning of the uniform is the responsibility of the band member. The jacket should be dry-cleaned and the pants must be dry-cleaned. You should remove the snap-on collar. If you don't you may not get it back. Also, do not send the uniform to the dry cleaner on the school hanger since it will no doubt get swapped for a different one.

Remember to remove all stars/bars (leaders). Shoes should be kept without scuff marks and gloves should be kept clean. The uniform should be cleaned as often as necessary and particularly prior to contests.

Uniform Alterations:

Students are measured for their uniform during the summer and the uniforms are issued just prior to the first football game. If pants have to be shortened, the uniform committee will take care of all alterations.

Rules relating to uniforms:

1. Students are always in full uniform, abbreviated uniform, or street clothes.
2. They should not wear the uniform without permission except at band events.
3. Nothing should be laid on top of a uniform except possibly another uniform.
4. Nothing with sleeves is worn over the uniform jacket with the exception of school-provided rain gear.
5. Keep warm layers of clothing underneath as needed.
6. No eating or drinking (except water) while in uniform. Often when they do eat they remove the uniform jacket.
7. Jewelry is not worn while in uniform.
6. Hair should not go over the collar on the back of the neck. If hair is long, it will need to be put in a short ponytail, in a hair net, or put up into the hat.

There are some special exceptions approved by the band director.

The uniform is a rather sacred thing. Therefore, it should be well cared for and you will no doubt notice a higher level of conduct of members while wearing it. The uniform is not to be worn half-on, half-off.

Band Practices

1. The band has a three or four day camp (depending on the last day of school) from 9:00 – 1:00 in June. It is either held the week school is dismissed for the summer, or the following week.
2. Band Camp and Band Practices will occupy most of August.
3. Once school begins they usually practice on Tuesdays and Thursdays after school until 6:00 p.m. until the competition season is over in early November
4. ***Being at every practice is extremely important and must be a top priority with every band member.***
5. Students are given the Attendance policy to review with their parents.
6. ***Parents should not call the band director, except in emergency situations.***
 - a. Students are responsible for requesting their own excuse, except in emergency situations.
 - b. Being absent from school does NOT excuse a member from practice. When a student/parent calls in to notify of their absence, they must ask the attendance office to notify the Band Director as well!

Here are some other helpful things to know about band practices. Dismissal time is the time the band is actually dismissed on the practice field. Allow additional time (about 15 minutes) for the students to get from the field to the band room, put their instrument away, etc. During the fall the mornings can be warm and then turn quite chilly during the afternoon. Try to encourage your child to be aware of this and have proper clothing for practice. Practices are usually held in rain, shine, or whatever. If the weather is dangerous (lightning), the band stays out of the weather, but does practice. Practices are open to parents and alumni to watch, but don't expect your child to be available to talk to during rehearsal.

Note: If a band member needs to be excused from a practice early, they need to take their books, etc., with them to the practice field since the band room is locked during practice.

Sectionals (Informal group practices, usually during the summer):

Most band members set high goals for themselves as far as learning to play their instrument and more specifically the music they are learning to perform. To reach those goals they find it important to practice beyond the scheduled band practices. For that reason, students themselves often organize sectionals that are held at homes, in parks, or wherever, where groups of students who play the same instrument get together to practice and help one another.

Sectionals are almost never official or mandatory and most often the band director is not even aware of them. Most of the pressure to be at sectionals comes from band members themselves and members who want to better themselves will no doubt make them nearly as high a priority as scheduled band practices.

Band Camp (currently held at Greenbrier Youth Camp, in Anthony, WV)

Most kids considering whether or not to join the marching band have probably heard some pretty scary rumors about band camp. Most of what you and your child have heard is simply not true. Here is what band camp is really like.

Band camp lasts one week and costs approximately **\$225**. A sample schedule is provided in the appendix for you. For many going to camp for the first time it may be the toughest week of their life to that point. But it may also be the week they will learn more than they ever have. Some parents have been amazed at the positive changes in their child upon returning from camp. Suddenly beds are made and rooms are kept cleaner at home and the kids demonstrate a higher level of responsibility. Not all kids change as much as others, but no doubt all will change, and for the better. **A qualified nurse is usually present at camp during the week, but is not guaranteed. Emergency medical services are available through Greenbrier County.**

The camp nurse would like you to make sure your child comes with a **good pair of broken in shoes** and you might even consider arch supports. The kids will be on their feet 8-10 hours/day doing hard marching. The biggest problems kids have are due to wearing worn out shoes.

Though not prohibited, kids are not encouraged to call home but be assured you will be contacted if there is an emergency. Any band member who cannot follow the rules of the camp will have their parents called and their stay at camp will come to an end as well as their membership in the band. Note: Cell phone reception at the camp is essentially nonexistent.

Band camp is the place where bonding takes place and the band becomes a unit with each one caring and pulling for the other. During this time the band really comes together and it's possible then that they actually become "The Pride of Salem". By the end of the week band camp has become a special place.

The students hold a special "first" performance for the parents and supporters at the end of band camp. The last full day of camp (usually either Friday or Saturday), the parents are invited to come up to camp and to watch the band perform their "Camp Show".

Football Games

The band attends football games to support the football team. They usually perform at every game (home and away) unless the weather is really miserable or worse. Home game performances are always at halftime and most often the performance is prior to the game at away games (about 20 minutes before game time). The show usually goes on rain or snow. Only lightning will stop things.

At home games the band always sits in the lower rows on the home side, in the section nearest the field house. Many of the band parents sit either in the section next to the band or in the rows just above the band. It's good for parents to sit in the area because often a lot of informal information is learned from other parents and it's a good time to become acquainted with other parents and become part of the family.

At games, parents don't do much visiting with band members but it is permissible on a limited basis. Friends of band members are discouraged from visiting. The reason is that the Band has a job to do and we let them do it without a lot of distractions. At away games things are about the same except there is usually much less seating available.

After home games you can expect the band to be dismissed about an hour following the game. Away games are more difficult to predict because of distance, traffic conditions, slow buses, breakdowns, etc. The band director will often guess at a dismissal time but it is only his best estimate. The best advice is to have patience and if you find yourself waiting, take the time to visit and talk with other parents in the Visitor's parking lot. This informal gathering is a good time to learn from some of the experiences of the veteran parents.

We do have the benefit of having a Band Hotline for dismissal times. The number is:
540-387-8187

This number is an informational line only. You cannot leave messages there. It is usually updated each week on Mondays, and lists the activities for the week.

Marching Band Contests/Competitions:

The most important activity of the marching band is the participation in band contests. As stated earlier, the most important thing parents can do to support their children and the band is to attend contests. In other words, Band Contests are where it counts.

Contests are events where anywhere from about a dozen to as many as fifty bands come together and perform on a football field while being judged in different aspects of their performance: Drum Major, Color Guard, Drum Line, Marching, Music, and General Effect.

Our band is now competing, for the largest part, in the United States Scholastic Band Association (USSBA) circuit. This organization allows the band to be judged on a national scale, with regional, state, and national contests being held. Our classification is based on the number of members in the band, so from year to year, we could be in different classes. At JMU, when we compete, we usually enter the highest class regardless of our size to compete against the best.

The goal of the band is not to win trophies or their division, but to do their best and to outscore their previous best. If they do that, the contests will be a success and they will have something to be proud of. Traditionally, however, the band has won more than its share of trophies, as you will witness when you enter the band room.

It's very important for parents to attend contests. Their presence adds to the motivation of the band and shows the band (particularly their child) that they care. Usually after each contest there is a time – called “Mingling” - when parents can mix with the band and share hugs and emotions. There are usually plenty of both. It's really a special time. And, if the band takes top honors, they sometimes are allowed to play an encore performance, which really tops things off.

Salem usually attends four or five contests each fall. They are always on Saturdays and, most of the time, are not two weeks in a row. Contests often attended are at James Madison University and other areas of Virginia, Maryland, Tennessee, North Carolina and Pennsylvania.

You can expect a host of parents to be at each contest, even the ones farther away. Salem parents try to sit together. Look for the Salem jackets, hats, and flags when you arrive. We'll try to watch for you too.

Often the boosters provide bag lunches for the band when the band attends a contest. Any additional meals are to be purchased by the band members at their own expense. Parents should insure they send enough money for their kids to buy reasonably good meals.

Contest line ups are not complete until just a few days prior to the contest, so specific information is usually not sent home until Thursday prior to the contest. The information will also be put on the band's website – but it will not have phone numbers and hotel information for security reasons. That hotel and phone number information will be on the printed contest handout given directly to the students.

Another thing is that Salem likes to do their final preparation and warm-up at a location near the contest but not at the contest site. For that reason the band usually does not arrive until

shortly before their performing time. If you don't know this, it will cause you some anxiety. Even knowing it, you tend to keep looking for them. Understand, however, that this is the plan and it seems to work well. We will be there in time to perform at our scheduled time!

Contests have an admission fee of anywhere from five to fifteen dollars. Food and drinks are also available. Sometimes it gets quite chilly so bundle up if you think it will get cold and bring a blanket.

Contest Judging and the “Salem” View

From time to time, parents go to contests, watch their children perform, and then become bewildered as to the outcome of the contest or competition. Keep in mind that the results of a contest are the **opinion** of six to eight people – the judges. That's what the scores in reality are. So, we attend contests and competitions to hopefully gain insight into how to perform better in the future through the judges comments, and to compete against the best marching bands that we can.

Contest “Etiquette”

It is very important that our parents and fans understand that a band contest and a football performance are two very different atmospheres. There are always going to be fans that talk during other band's performances, and whoop and holler for their band. It is expected that Salem parents understand that since we do not consider ourselves in competition with anyone other than ourselves, we support all the bands in competition by watching and applauding their efforts. Salem parents are encouraged to quietly listen during all performances, so as to not distract the bands or their fans.

There is nothing wrong with showing a little more “excitement and exuberance” for the “Pride”, but if a band is entertaining, and you like them – please show them. Also, keep in mind that not all the bands that compete have as enthusiastic fans as ours – wearing their school name and colors, etc – so you never know who may be sitting around you. Let's have both our band and our fans welcome at all contest sites and venues because we treat everyone with respect. Talking during any band's show should be discouraged. As you will find out, it's at the contests that you can really hear and appreciate those quiet, soft musical segments!

The Band Room

The band room is a special place that is given special respect and has a set of rules associated with it. If only our kids would take care of their bedrooms half as well as they take care of the band room.

Here are some rules that the kids must follow and I would recommend the parents follow them as well. Food or drinking, including chewing/bubble gum is not allowed in the band room.

If you drop something, pick it up. Band members are required to refrain from unnecessary loud talking or other noise in the band room. The floor is kept almost spotless. After every practice, football game, contests, or anything else, band members will inspect the floor for even the smallest piece of trash.

There are times parents should not go in the band room. After football games, contests, and practices there are always squad leaders and generals meetings. These should be considered private times with parents not present. This policy also applies to times of preparation prior to these same events. **A good rule to follow would be that parents are free to go in the band room for booster activities and when invited.** It's also okay to go in after Opus. At other times, it's best to wait outside in the front of the school and talk to one another.

Student Leader Meetings

One thing that you will soon learn, particularly if your son or daughter is a student leader is that there are frequent meetings. Almost without exception there are leader meetings after every scheduled practice or activity. These meetings can be of various lengths and usually squad leaders are dismissed first, then generals. At these meetings the student leaders discuss improvements, solve problems, make plans, and take care of virtually every concern relating to the band. These meetings may be held in the band room or choir room, and members are encouraged to be frank and open. Here the student leaders learn how to accept and give criticism and help develop their interactive skills. They also learn much about planning and organization.

The experience they gain from being a part of these meetings is well worth the additional time they require. Parents should refrain from being in the band room during these meetings and should only interrupt these meetings in case of emergency situations.

Parking

Though some do it, the school prefers that we do not park in the back parking lot when picking up our kids after a band activity since it can get pretty congested back there. And even more importantly, don't park along the roadway or in the rear entranceway to the band room. The recommended place to park is in front of the school in the Visitor's parking lot – not in front of the school as the buses returning from football games pull up out front. **Please try to comply with this.**

Overnight trip concerns

Chaperones and a volunteer nurse to handle medical emergencies go with the band to all contests. But it is the band leadership and disciplinary rules that make these trips “safe” for our children.

You may have heard **rumors** that when the band stays at motels it is permitted for boys and girls to visit each other’s rooms. That used to be the case, but is no longer permitted. We now try to use a large social room where kids can get together. But even there, band officers are present to enforce rules. And band officers and band staff patrol the halls at night to make sure the rules are being followed. Parents who happen to visit or stay at the same motel as the band should observe and follow the same rules as band members when it comes to visiting.

Even having read the above it still may be a little hard for an eighth grade parent to be completely comfortable with all of this. Be assured, however, that these policies have really worked and the Salem band has had very few problems.

While traveling, particularly on overnight trips, the band occasionally has free time during which they can walk to areas beyond where they are staying. Some of the rules governing these free periods are that the band is always given boundaries that they must not go beyond and they must travel in minimum groups of three (sometimes five) with at least one (or two) veteran boy(s) a part of that group.

The band also has rules associated with traveling on buses. Loud talking is not allowed, kids can’t be under blankets, and if a boy and girl are sitting together they should not be doing anything that you wouldn’t expect two of the same sex to do (hugging, kissing, etc.). There are band generals on each bus that police these policies probably more than parents would.

All-District Band

Each year band members have the opportunity to try out for All-District band. The tryouts are held on the 2nd Saturday in December. Band members from many different schools in our region are involved. Trying out involves playing scales and sight-reading music individually before a judge and getting scored on your performance. Those receiving the highest scores are selected to participate in the All-District band.

Of those, the highest scorers form the symphonic band and the others form the concert band. The first weekend in February, all selected band members come together on a Friday and Saturday at a selected school for rather intense practice with guest conductors topped by a concert open to the public on Saturday afternoon. If the event is held outside the Roanoke Valley, then the students are usually housed in a local hotel.

Being selected for district band is a high honor and should be a goal for all band members. It means you are one of the best in the region. Those achieving the top score for their instrument have the opportunity to try out for the All-Virginia Band and Orchestra. Being selected for the All-State Band would make you one of the best in the state.

Indoor Program

This program was implemented in 2003 as a means of keeping the Color Guard and Percussion involved in the “off-season”. There is an additional cost to participating in this group (somewhere in the range of \$ 150.00 to \$ 400.00) and financial assistance is not available for this activity.

There are two distinct groups that compete during the late Winter/early Spring:

A. Winter Guard

There are two groups offered – one for more experienced guard members – Salem Varsity Winter Guard, and for more inexperienced – Salem Junior Varsity. These groups are open to any student and are for flag, rifle, sabre, and dance.

B. Percussion Theater

This group is open to any student that marched the previous fall in the marching band, and is for all percussion instruments – previous experience on percussion is not necessary.

The two programs compete at the same locations and rehearsals are held usually twice a week.

Band Classes

The following band classes are held regularly during the school day. However, after school rehearsals will be scheduled for Opus in the spring, and are required unless excused by the Director. In addition, special called rehearsals may occasionally be scheduled as well. Those students with conflicts should speak with the Director. Those students signing up for a band class are required to participate in the Marching Band unless excused by the Director.

There are three different band classes to take at Salem High School:

A. Concert Band

This class is designed for incoming freshman and those students with less experience. It is currently divided into two sections – Percussion and Winds – and may be further divided into Percussion, Brass and Woodwinds.

B. Symphonic Band

This class is an auditioned ensemble for more experienced players, and requires students to work on their music outside of class.

C. Jazz Band

This class is also an auditioned ensemble for experienced players, and consists of saxophones, trombones, trumpets, and a rhythm section (piano, bass, guitar, and drums). There is a high demand on this group for outside performances, and each member is expected to participate in all Symphonic Band concerts.

Opus

Opus is a musical variety show staged by the band around the last weekend in April. Opus has little to do with the marching band but it is such an important and enjoyable event that it deserves mentioning. It is presented in the high school auditorium and has become so popular that it has been extended to two nights. Tickets are cheap and you will get far more entertainment than you paid for. During the show you will probably both laugh and cry, particularly if your child is a senior. The final curtain is usually a very emotional time for the band because that is their last performance together and it is also when the whistle gets passed on to the next year's drum major. Whatever you do, don't miss it! Also, on Saturday evening, the Boosters offer "Dinner and Opus" as a minor fund-raising activity.

Conclusion

The "Pride of Salem" is much more than a group of kids who do halftime shows at Friday night football games. Unfortunately, that is how many people see them. In reality, the "Pride of Salem" is an organization that along with marching and music teaches such things as responsibility, leadership, character, integrity, self-worth, respect, and pride. It is a tough program that requires hard work and commitment. Those who can't accept the challenge usually drop out. Those who stick with it develop or enhance skills that will benefit and stay with them for the rest of their lives.

If you talk to most any parent of a veteran band member you will be told how pleased they are with the band program and how their son/daughter has developed many good qualities from being involved in it. It probably takes a year or two for new parents to have enough insight into the program to allow them to see its full benefit. A wise parent will fully support their child if they have an interest in being in the marching band.

Band Camp Schedule

First Day of Camp

**Musters may not be listed, but are always 5 minutes prior to events.

- 9:00 a.m.. - Muster - ready to go
- 11:00 a.m. - Depart for camp
- 1:00 p.m. - Arrive at camp
- 1:30 p.m. - Cleaning time
- 5:30 PM - evening meal/clean cabins/inspection
- 6:30 PM - rehearsal/continue cleaning camp
- 10:30 PM - Evening muster
- 10:45 PM - Lights out/members in cabins/taps
- 11:00 PM - Squad leader meeting
- 12 MIDNIGHT - Commence security watch

Regular Full Days

- 5:45 AM - Commence pre-reveille activities
- 6:45 AM - Wake-up (Reveille)
- 7:00 AM - Stretches/Exercises/Field Drill
- 8:00 AM - Breakfast/clean cabins/inspection
- 9:00 AM - Marching Rehearsal
- 12:30 PM - Lunch/clean cabins/inspection
- 1:30 PM - Music rehearsal/Sectional Rehearsals
- 4:30 PM - Free time (swimming, rest, chilling; On Sunday -church service)
- 5:30 PM - Supper/clean cabins/inspection
- 6:00 PM - (*On specified day, parents may begin arriving at this time!*)
- 7:00 PM - **PARENTS SHOW (on specified day)**
- 9:00 PM - **ALL VISITORS ARE ASKED TO LEAVE CAMP BY THIS TIME (on day of Parents Show)**
- 10:30 PM - Evening muster
- 10:45 PM - Lights out/members in cabins/taps
- 11:00 PM - Squad leader meeting
- 12 MIDNIGHT - Commence security watch

Last Day of Camp

- 5:45 AM - Commence pre-reveille activities
- 6:45 AM - Wake-up (Reveille)
- 7:00 AM - Stretches/Exercises/Field Drill
- 8:00 AM - Breakfast/clean cabins/inspection
- 9:00 AM - Morning Rehearsal and FINAL RUN-THROUGH
- 12:30 PM - Lunch/clean cabins/inspection
- 1:30 PM - break camp
- 3:00 PM - Depart
- 5:30 PM - Arrive at S.H.S.
- 6:00 P M - Dismissal