

Parents and Students-

Welcome to the official start of the 2023-2024 school year! We are so excited to with your students this year in band. Below you will find a variety of different information to help them get started! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me, email is my preferred method of communication.

My philosophy on emailing parents is I try to do fewer emails and pack them full of information versus sending out daily emails. During marching season I try to keep it to a weekly email but sometimes it will be more than that. If you ever need to find a previous email and have trouble finding them in your inbox, every email I send out is saved on the locked side of our website and stored in chronological order so it is easy to find. Simply go to the "members only" tab of the website www.oeband.com and type in the password Hawks and then click on the update button to see all of the archived emails.

Band Calendar

I have attached a calendar to this email of the dates for the school year (some are still TBA). This same calendar is also on the band website. If we would need to make any changes on the calendar throughout the year we will always update the website calendar first. My suggestion is to sync the calendar on the website to your personal google calendar and any changes we would make would automatically update on your device. The only dates that are currently not on the calendar that we are still working to add are the date for our annual Bingo event and a potential send-off concert for Wind Ensemble for their KMEA performance in Wichita. As soon as I get those dates finalized I will add them to a weekly email.

Band Handbook

Attached is our band handbook which contains critical information for all band classes at East. Rather than go into detail in this email about our grading policy, uniform policy, or other items it is all listed out in this handbook. One of the required forms is a policy awareness form that states that both parent/guardian and the student have read and understand the policies included in the band handbook.

Forms

Attached to this email are the forms that are required for participation in band (regardless of which group your child is enrolled in). I will point out that one of the medical forms requires a Notary. We cannot accept it unless it has been notarized. **We will have a forms and fees night on Thursday Aug. 17th immediately prior to the OE Back to School Night if you would like to come and complete the forms (or turn them in if you filled them out in advance) and pay for fees or contributions.** We do not currently have a Notary scheduled to be at that meeting but we do have one scheduled to be in the band room from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. on August 21st. You can also find a Notary at your bank if that date doesn't work for your schedule. I do want to emphasize to parents of students in second semester jazz band and drumline that if you would like your child to be able to carpool with other students to events like we did last year because of the shortage of bus drivers, please make sure you fill out the transportation form correctly to allow students to do so. If you have questions we are happy to go over things with you at the Forms and Fee night on Thursday.

Fees and Suggested Contributions

This information is outlined in the band handbook but I wanted to take a moment to highlight it. For concert band students (3rd and 6th hour) we ask for a contribution to the boosters of \$50 per

student to the boosters general fund. It is a suggested contribution and is not required. However, we have had multiple budget cuts over the last several years and we rely on the boosters to cover a lot of items I used to be able to cover with my building budget.

For marching band (1st and 2nd hour) we ask for a donation of \$350 per student. While that is absolutely a lot of money and I do not take this request lightly, there are programs we will compete against that ask for three or four times that amount. We try really hard to do some great fundraisers to keep this cost as low as possible. Again this is not a fee but a suggested contribution that we are really counting on to pay our bills as a top marching band program in Kansas. Feel free to break that payment into smaller payments and spread it out throughout the year if needed (please let me know if that is your plan). If you are not in the financial place you can afford the contribution if you could just let me know so we can plan accordingly for our budget.

The true fees that are required to pay are outlined as follows:

- Students who order a Dry Fit uniform shirt (new members and returning members who need a new one)- \$15
- Students who order Marching Shoes (new members and returning members who need a new one)- \$40

NYC Band Trip 2024

The band will travel to NYC to participate in a Bands of America Regional Wind Band Festival in April. I tried to share this information with as many students as possible last year, but it is very challenging with students entering the program from 10 different middle schools. If you didn't have a chance to attend our trip meeting in the spring and would still like to attend the trip it is not too late to sign-up! Please reach out to me and I can share more information if you are interested. We always anticipate having a few students who sign-up at the start of the school year so it will not be a problem to add some.

For those parents who would like to be considered for financial assistance for the trip, we will be sharing information about that process in the coming weeks. Look for a stand along email on that subject soon. Likewise, for parents who are interested in serving as a chaperone we will be starting that process soon as well.

I do want to share that the dates have been finalized and they are a week earlier than we were hoping they would be. Our trip will be April 12 through the 15th. Unfortunately, that falls on the weekend for Regional Solo/Ensemble festival. I will try to organize our own solo/ensemble festival in place of Regionals, but students who choose to go on the trip will not be eligible for State Solo/Ensemble. If you feel strongly about trying to attend State, you will need to choose to not attend the trip and then you will be able to participate in Regionals and State if you advance.

Contact Mr. Smikahl for more information.

I try to list everything that applies to the entire program at the top of these emails and then I split information out to specific classes.

Our first booster meeting this year is August 29th at 7 p.m. in the band room. Please enter through door Z. The majority of information covered will be for marching band but I will be answering questions about the trip and providing any additional information that I have at each booster meeting.

Spirit Wear

Here is a link for spirit wear for Olathe East. <https://olatheeastband2023.itemorder.com/shop/sale/>

This is not required in any way, simply something we offer students. This store will close at the end of the month so please order now if you are interested! We have some great new logos for the band program in general that are not specific to marching band or jazz band.

Concert Band Class (3rd hour)

Students will not need their instrument for Monday, but they will need it starting on Tuesday. We will supply all books and music that is needed. A large portion of their grade for this class is daily participation so it will be very important that students have their instrument in class every day we meet.

Jazz Combo Class (4th hour)

This class will not be playing on Monday but will start playing on Tuesday. We will supply all books and music needed for this class as well. Students enrolled in this class in addition to concert band or marching band will be expected to practice more since they have two hours of band every day.

Percussion Class (6th hour)

This class is for students who play percussion and are not enrolled in marching band. I will send out a separate email with specific stick and mallet needs for the class. Since this class is small, I do plan to do some playing in this class on Monday so students should bring their stick bags.

Marching Band and Drumline (1st and 2nd hours)

There was a separate email that came from the boosters a few days ago with important information about Forms and Fees, Photos, and Volunteering in addition to the link to the spirit wear that I included above. Please make sure to read through that email and let me know if you have any questions.

A reminder that there are no on-site transportation arrangements for students. If they need to leave an event early or arrive late I must have a special transportation form filled out prior to the event. The special transportation form is available on the form page on the "members only" side of the website.

We will NOT have a 7 a.m. tomorrow (Monday). We will start 7 a.m. rehearsals on Tuesday. We WILL have our normal evening rehearsal tomorrow night from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Thanks,

Mr. Smikahl