

# Lancers

## COLORGUARD

# Handbook



Dear JILHS Color Guard Students and Parents,

Welcome to the John I. Leonard High School Marching Band and Color Guard program! This handbook is designed to answer any questions you might have concerning our color guard. Please read all of the information and look over the scheduled rehearsal and competition days.

I am very excited to be working with the students here at John I. Leonard High School again this year and I am looking forward to another fun and successful Marching Band Season with the Color Guard!

Sincerely,

Milton Joselyn – Director of Bands

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## **WHAT IS COLOR GUARD?**

Modern "color guard" has evolved over the years into a sport that's a form of dance theater. It uses props, along with movement, to express dynamic passages in the music accompanying the show.

A color guard is traditionally the visual representation of the music. Modern color guards use flags, sabres, rifles, batons, swing flags, air blades, and a few other pieces of equipment, as well as a mix of ballet, jazz, modern, and contemporary modern dance.

Today the guard uses choreography and equipment for added visual appeal during a marching band show. Usually marching bands and color guards perform during football games at halftime, out of tradition. When in competition, the color guard is judged in the caption auxiliary. During a competition the guard adds to the overall score of the band, but is also judged in its own category. Many color guards also compete independently in such circuits as Winter Guard International (WGI) and Tournament Indoor Association (TIA) and in the Summer through Drum and Bugle Corps in the Drum Corps International (DCI) circuit.

The color guard has a unique responsibility to interpret music through visual effects. These effects can range from flags, wooden rifles, sabers, or other props. Using a variety of colors, members of the color guard can set the mood of any marching band song. Due to the relationship between color guard and military drills, you have to practice to become a member of a color guard team. How many people do you know that can toss a flag ten feet in the air and catch it? There is a lot of work that goes into color guard routines. So, while there are many artistic elements to this sport, there is also a great deal of competition. Due to its increasing popularity, some have even suggested that it should become an Olympic sport.

In color guard, we emphasize training in the student's ability to spin, dance, and perform. It is very much a group activity, so learning to perform together is the ultimate goal (along with having fun of course!)

## **WHAT IS EXPECTED AS COLOR GUARD MEMBERS**

The greatest single factor that will determine the success of any organization is attitude! It takes dedication to reach goals. Students are expected to come to rehearsal with the right attitude of sincerity, concentration, and dedication to working hard to achieve success with their teammates. A good attitude and a strong work ethic is the difference between a winning organization and a mediocre group.

Members of the John I. Leonard High School Color Guard are asked to make a commitment to the program through their time and effort. As a member, you are required to commit to the rehearsal and performance schedule and you are required to show up on time. A commitment to the Lancer's Color Guard is one that requires a tremendous amount of time. You are also expected to follow all the behavioral rules set by John I. Leonard High School and to respect your instructors, peers, and chaperons.

Teamwork and group activities require that an individual put aside their personal feelings for the good of the group. What is required of one is required of all. When each individual is willing to give up a small part of her/himself, the group benefits. Personal sacrifice is an important component of color guard.

When the members of a competing group have pride, maturity, class, and style, it shows! When the members of a group are lacking these qualities, it shows even more! Remember, it takes much longer to build a good reputation than to ruin one.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Conflicts with the color guard schedule are the responsibility of the student. Rehearsal and performance schedules are given out in advance so that arrangements can be made. Color Guard is a demanding activity and involvement in outside activities should be limited to those that are compatible with the guard schedule. Students and their families are requested to plan appropriately when scheduling appointments, etc. so that rehearsals and performances are not missed.

Attendance at all practices and performances is mandatory. The only excused absences will be for a death in the immediate family, personal illness verified with a note from your parent or doctor, or an approved school-related activity with a note from the teacher. If a student needs to miss part or all of a rehearsal, an excused absence note must be given to Mr. Joselyn (Band Director) or put in his mailbox prior to rehearsal in all cases except illness. When you miss rehearsal due to illness, please let a captain know (just so that we know you're not going to be at rehearsal so we don't worry about you!) and bring an excused absence note to the next rehearsal. Excuses such as work and homework are not acceptable, homework should be completed before or after rehearsal or shows.

If a student is well enough to attend class during the school day, the student is expected to attend rehearsal.

In order to leave early from practices and competitions, the student must have a note written and signed by a parent stating a reason for early dismissal.

Every individual in the organization is a valued, contributing member, and any single absence detracts from the quality of our preparation and performance. Your contribution reflects on the entire group.

Any student with an unexcused absence during practice before a competition will not be allowed to participate in the competition. A great deal of information is given right before performances and it is detrimental to the rest of the team if a student misses those rehearsals.

Excessive tardiness or absences will result in the student losing their spot in the marching band and color guard program. Again, this is because every individual's attendance and performance contributes to the success of the guard and marching band. If someone isn't showing their commitment, it hurts the overall effectiveness and attitude of the group.

## **WHAT IF I WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN ANOTHER SPORT OR AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITY?**

Participation in other activities is definitely encouraged! However, since color guard and marching band is such a team activity, it must be your first priority.

For example, if a student wants to be on the cross-country team, and cross country has their practices immediately after school, that does not conflict with our 6pm - 9pm rehearsals and is completely fine. However, if there was a cross-country meet/competition on a color guard or marching band rehearsal or performance day, the student will not be excused from our rehearsal or performance to attend the other activity.

## **AUDITIONS**

Off-season Workshops or Mini-Workshops will be held in the spring and/or fall of every year to introduce students to the color guard activity. Before Band Camp, an audition will be held for any incoming 9th graders up to 12th grade where you will be expected to perform basic spinning, body movements and marching - anyone wishing to participate in the Color Guard is expected to audition, including veterans.

Based on your performance, you may be selected for a specific drill spot (position on the field) or as an "alternate" in the marching band. (See below for description of an Alternate and their responsibilities.) From there you will be expected to meet the responsibilities and commitments that will be required of you to be a Lancer Color Guard Member in the John I. Leonard High School Marching Band.

## THE ALTERNATE SYSTEM

During the spring, before the marching band season, we have to set the number for the color guard so the drill writer can start writing the show. Because of grades, absences, illness, injuries, and the competitive nature of the marching band, we always set the performance number lower than the number we start out with in the spring. For example, if we have 15 students sign up for color guard in the spring, we will set about 10 drill spots for the show. During band camp, students essentially audition for these spots.

This is very similar to the way a football or soccer team works, if there are 30 people on the team, they all practice together and work out together, but not all of them play throughout the entire game.

Placement for these spots will be determined by marching and spinning ability, along with attitude, attendance record, and number of tardies.

Students who do not immediately get a position on the field will be assigned to a shadow spot. All shadows or "alternates" are FULL members of the color guard. They will be issued uniforms and are expected to participate in all practices. During fall rehearsals and competitions, they will share a drill spot with another student according to which movement they know the best and are most comfortable with. Students who are assigned a shadow or "alternate" spot will have a full drill spot and perform with the band for all parades and football pre-game performances.

In the event that a student has to quit the team because of an injury or illness, or if a student performing the show is showing a poor attitude or performance level, has multiple attendance issues, or becomes academically ineligible, an alternate will either temporarily or permanently replace that student. Any student who has their participation level altered due to attendance issues or behavioral consequences will not be refunded.

## WHAT TO EXPECT DURING REHEARSALS

At the beginning of rehearsals, we will stretch individually or as a group, depending on how much time we have before meeting up with the rest of the band. We will go through some basics exercises, which you are expected to have memorized by the time band camp starts. The quicker we can go through warm ups and basics, the more time we can spend on learning/improving our choreography. Typically we will have an hour or two on our own as a color guard before we join the band for ensemble time.

Please wear appropriate clothing to rehearsal. In order to dance and spin, you will need to wear clothing that allows you to move. Jeans and/or sandals are not allowed. Please wear pants that you can dance in and tennis shoes or guard shoes that allow you to point your toes. Also, realize that our season ranges from extremely hot summer days in August to very cold and rainy days in October and November. Be prepared for whatever type of temperature we may encounter!

Color Guard is a physically challenging activity. Throughout the season, we will have abdominal workouts, cardiovascular exercises, and we will also be running. In order to spin and stay strong throughout an 8-minute marching show, it is important that you are in shape and strong.

What we expect of you is pretty simple: show up on time, work hard, keep a great attitude, keep quiet during ensemble time, and have fun!

## REHEARSAL RULES

- No gum or candy at practice or performances
- Members must bring a water bottle with a no spill top
- Members must be dressed in appropriate workout attire, including tennis shoes or guard shoes, socks, shorts, and a t-shirt. Sweatshirts and waterproof jackets during the fall months are recommended. Members should never be in violation of the school dress code
- The last practice before a performance is MANDATORY in order for PARTICIPATION in the performance. Many last minute adjustments and corrections are made before a performance.
- Excessive absences or tardies for any reason will be cause for the loss of your drill spot. No more than three tardies will be allowed and no more than three absences.
- No jewelry should be worn at practice. Stud earrings are acceptable. No watches, bracelets or necklaces. Color guard members should carefully consider bringing these to rehearsal and having a secure location in which to keep them. No jewelry should be worn for any performance.

- Color guard members should make a conscious effort to quickly become acquainted with the warm up and stretching routine so that practice may begin quickly and safely.
- Gloves and shoes will be worn at all times unless otherwise instructed.

## WHAT SHOULD I BRING TO EVERY REHEARSAL?

- Equipment: Flags, Weapons, gloves, Black and White Tape, and any props (including hats if applicable)
- Drill book, Guard Binder, and sharpened pencil
- Water Jug...DO NOT share water jugs! We don't need a guard epidemic!
- Snacks – like protein bars (to keep your energy level high)
- Sunblock (highly recommended for summer months)
- Proper shoes: a comfortable, flexible sneaker or guard shoe is an ideal rehearsal shoe. You will spend the majority of rehearsal on your feet. Running shoes with curled toes can cause problems. The silk may get caught on the tread of the shoe sole.
- Hat is acceptable to shield sun.

## WHAT TO EXPECT DURING COMPETITION DAYS

Competition days are long but are also one of the best parts of color guard and marching band. During competition days, we will typically arrive at the high school fairly early in the morning, rehearse, get into uniform and do hair and makeup, and then jump on the bus to go to the competition.

Students are expected to eat a good breakfast **BEFORE THEY ARRIVE**, and bring money for food. Students will always get schedules, usually verbally, before each competition that will tell them when to arrive and what meals they will need to provide for themselves.

When we arrive at the competition site, we will warm up and then perform with the marching band. Afterwards, students will get out of uniform (bring warm clothes to change into along with your show shirt and/or warm ups or band jackets!) and then eat and watch other performances. We typically get back to the high school pretty late.

What we expect of you during performance days: show up on time, work hard, keep a great attitude, have a great performance, only say positive things about other groups when you're watching them, and have fun!

As a marching band policy, students are expected to stay for the entire competition/football game. If a student needs to leave a competition early, they must bring a note from a parent/guardian the week before or morning of the competition. Before leaving the show site, the student **AND** their parent/guardian must check in with the band director or any of the other instructors so we see who you are leaving with.

## YOUR "GUARD BAG"

A Guard Bag is your personal bag that must be carried to all performances so that you will always have what you need. The contents of the bag are your responsibility to maintain. Your Guard Bag should include the following:

- Hairspray
- Hair Brush
- Comb
- Hair Pins/Bobby Pins
- Hair Bands
- Extra Pair of Tall Black Socks
- Safety Pins
- Black Electrical Tape
- White Electrical Tape
- Show Makeup (colors to be determined by Guard Instructor) for health reasons, you **MUST USE YOUR OWN!**
- A small compact mirror
- Baby Wipes (or WetOnes) to wipe makeup off or do quick cleanups

## COLOR GUARD UNIFORM PROCEDURES

While you are in uniform, you are constantly being observed. Your personal appearance and your actions represent not only you, but also your band, school, and community. The uniform assigned to you is a valuable asset to the band. You will be responsible for its care and maintenance. If something needs to be fixed or adjusted on your uniform, simply report it to one of the Guard Captains or the nearest staff member.

The manner in which the band represents itself can leave either a positive or negative impression on its audience. The care of the uniform, and the band member's behavior while wearing it, goes far toward creating pride and continuing tradition.

- The specific uniform will be determined by the Color Guard Instructor and Band Director. This will likely require you to purchase accessories for your uniform. Please discuss monetary concerns with the color guard staff and the band director if a payment plan needs to be worked out.
- All portions of your uniform including shoes should be kept clean. This includes cleaning and/or polishing shoes as well as regularly washing your uniform. Please do this at the discretion of the Color Guard Instructor.
- Hair and makeup designs will be determined by the Color Guard Instructor. All students must comply with the look to the best of his/her ability for the purpose of uniformity. Please follow the instructions of the color guard staff to their exact specifications.
- A student in violation of any of the uniform procedures will not be permitted to perform.

### YOUR UNIFORM IS A SYMBOL OF DIGNITY, PRESTIGE, AND STATURE. WEAR IT PROUDLY!

## COLOR GUARD ROOM

This room is to be used exclusively for the storage of color guard equipment including flags, rifles, sabres, and other props. It can also be used to store your belongings **ONLY DURING** practices or performances. Students are expected to keep the color guard room neat and clean at all times. It is every member's responsibility to ensure that the equipment and props are put away properly. **NO FOOD OR DRINKS** are permitted in the color guard room.

## EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

Color Guard is a performance group distinguished by the use of props, particularly flags, rifles, sabres, or other equipment. Various color guard equipment including flags, weapons, and guard binders are issued to each student at the start of the season. You are responsible for having your guard binders and drill books with you at **ALL REHEARSALS**.

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 and per given instructions. Should a member pass off his/her equipment to another, the initial member is responsible for the "fate" of the equipment. At the end of the season, the director or guard instructor will announce a return date for all equipment and uniforms. If the items should not be returned, the student is responsible for the cost to replace that item.

## AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

At the end of the season, individuals within the group who show outstanding improvement, commitment, and teamwork will receive awards to acknowledge their achievements. Leadership certificates and attendance certificates will be awarded as well.

**Spirit/Pride Award (Most Spirited):** a color guard member showing enthusiasm, spirit, and pride for not only the color guard but the school as well; someone who is excited to simply be at practice and the opportunity to participate in a group that is fun.

**Most Improved:** to the member of the color guard who shows the most skill improvement since try-outs

**Superior Performer:** a member of the color guard who consistently shows excellence in performance with showmanship, precision, and knowledge

**Color Guard Service Award:** awarded to a member of guard who consistently attends and fulfills beyond the requirements the needs of the color guard; who volunteers to help and goes beyond the call of duty

**Color Guard Leadership Award:** awarded to an individual who always leads by example with a smile and energy that portrays what the color guard stands for; an individual who is a member others can turn to for help and support, someone who leads the color guard

## FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Each member of the color guard will be expected to participate in all fundraisers held by the Marching Band and Color Guard. The group itself has expenses, such as music, equipment, uniform maintenance, etc. Each member must therefore contribute to the fundraising needs of the unit. Each member will be assigned a uniform and equipment. There are some parts of the uniform and certain equipment that must be purchased by each member. A general overview of yearly costs is listed below.

Individual Membership Costs - estimated and subject to change each year.

**THESE WILL BE HANDED OUT ON FORMS AT THE BEGINNING OF EVERY SEASON - TO BE RETURNED PROMPTLY!**

Fees are expected to be paid before the end of band camp so that orders can be made and received early in the season. Of course, a payment schedule can always be arranged. In any case, confidentiality will be a top priority. Color Guard is a group for everyone. No one should ever feel left out or excluded for financial reasons. **NO ONE SHOULD NOT AUDITION BECAUSE THEY CANNOT AFFORD THE COSTS. IF MONEY IS A PROBLEM, PLEASE SPEAK WITH THE BAND DIRECTOR OR GUARD INSTRUCTOR.**

## TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Rehearsals are open. You are welcome to observe rehearsal at any time, as long as you do not distract your child or any other members.
- It is highly recommended that parents join and actively participate in the Band Parents Association, designed to help students achieve great success. We constantly need people to sew, chaperon, help with equipment, travel, and other miscellaneous projects. The group also finds additional ways to fund the performance groups' needs.
- Rehearsals begin and end at the listed time on the schedule. If you are dropping off or picking your child up, please allow 5 - 10 minutes for them to gather/put away their equipment.
- Please review the schedule and the attendance policy. It's important that you are helping your child adhere to the policy.
- Please come to the shows and support the marching band and color guard (we will need chaperons too - please volunteer - it is vital to our group!). Wearing John I. Leonard High School colors and sitting as a group shows unity and strong support to both your child and the other marching bands and parents.
- While at a competition, please do not speak poorly of other bands or color guards. This reflects badly on our group. Cheer enthusiastically for other teams - all of those students work hard and deserve recognition!
- At competitions, please do not use flash photography.
- If you or your child has any questions or concerns about anything as the season progresses, please let the staff know. It is best to approach us after rehearsal or to give one of us a call or send an email. Contact info is below.

## OUR RECOMMENDATION

The Lancer Color Guard will spend many hours outside of normal school hours to build and maintain our high standards. We ask that you consider carefully the commitment that you will be making and the responsibilities you must accept. During the Fall Field Show and Parade season, we meet at least 2 afternoons per week to prepare programs and rehearse. Extra rehearsals are frequently scheduled immediately prior to performances. As an extracurricular activity, we never want our group to interfere with your education and grades - Make sure that you will be able to handle our practice and performance schedule and still maintain good grades. Marching Band and Color Guard is a highly rewarding experience that is fun and exciting and we would love for you to be a part of it!