



Amherst Marching Comets Color Guard Handbook



I. REQUIREMENTS

- A. On game day Friday, each member of the guard will wear the assigned outfit to school to show support for the coming event.
- B. According to State rules, a student may not participate in an activity if they have been absent more than ½ day from school the day of the activity, and they should not be at the event unless discussed with the directors. Practice is included in this rule. Color Guard members must notify their advisor via email at least one hour before the report time for the event unless that student was absent an entire day from school.
- C. Transportation will be provided to all activities away from school. Each student must travel with the band.
- D. Be at the school for all away events at the designated time. Tardiness may result in missing the bus.
- E. Ride designated transportation to and from activities unless family transportation has been pre-approved.
- F. Color Guard Members must check out with the advisor before leaving any home event.
- G. At the end of away games, remain in the designated area until all are ready to report to the bus.

II. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- A. Members must be currently enrolled in Marion L. Steele High School.
- B. If a student transfers into the district after auditions have been completed, the student will be allowed to go through the process of auditioning with the advisor as the only judge as long as they audition before the scheduled summer camp.
- C. Color Guard must take priority over all other extracurricular and outside activities, including jobs.
- D. Members MUST attend ALL required activities, such as camp, games, practices, performances, and competitions. If the color guard member is ill, has a family emergency, or has provided 24-hour notice of an urgent appointment, the member will be excused. June and July practices require one week in advance notice for planned events, such as vacations, camps, or family functions. Failure to attend a mandatory event during the school year without proper notification and permission will result in a 3rd quarter during the next football game. Three 3rd quarters will result in a dismissal. Unless otherwise noted, all events are considered mandatory.
 - 1. Vacation during summer practices only will be excused, but it may interfere with the member's ability to perform at community events.
- E. Members must maintain good citizenship, attendance, class performance, and teacher recommendations during the time on the team and for auditions. Problems in any area will be disciplined.
- F. Being a Color Guard member one year IN NO WAY GUARANTEES PLACEMENT IN THE SECTION FOR THE FOLLOWING YEAR. All members must go through the same audition/selection process the next spring. In addition to ability, each color guard member's cooperation, effort, and attitude will be considered. The section will be chosen by outside judges and the current advisor, with input from the band director, and their decision is FINAL.

III. CONDUCT

- A. By accepting the privilege of being a color guard member for the Amherst Marching Comets, the member accepts the fact that his/her actions are more prominent than those not associated with the band.
- B. Because of this prominence, and because members represent Marion L. Steele High School, exemplary behavior is mandatory at all times, anywhere in the community, and at all functions where the color guard is recognized as representatives of MLS. This includes Social Media.
- C. Proper appearance is required at all times, with clothing appropriate to the occasion.
- D. No Jewelry is permitted during practices or performances.



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- E. No nail polish is permitted during contest.
- F. Hair must be pulled back at practice and games. Hair must be off of the face and secure. Continuously fixing hair is unacceptable. The appropriate hair piece must be worn for all events.
- G. Bright shades of nail polish, excessive makeup, and unnatural colored hair (blue, orange, purple, pink etc.) are prohibited. Other performing items may be decided upon by the entire section with final approval by the advisor. Fingernails need to be worn at an active length.
- H. Members must not use foul language at practices, in school, at games, camp, competitions, etc.
- I. Excessive public displays of affection are never considered appropriate while representing the section.
- J. Smoking or drug usage (including alcohol) is not allowed at any time.
- K. All rules and regulations stated in the MLS Student Handbook and the AMC Handbook will be imposed at all times.
- L. Members must display proper behavior in class, including not skipping, cheating, or being late. Punishment in the form of being benched for 3rd quarter the following game will be in addition to the school discipline.
- M. A disciplinary system will be used to deal with minor infractions throughout the year (Year being defined as the moment one makes the team through the following year's auditions.):
 - 1. Late to practice: Bleachers for every minute late to be done after practice.
 - 2. Unprepared for Practice: 2 laps around the band field after practice.
 - 3. Late for bus/game: Benched 3rd quarter.
 - 4. Miss bus or game: Benched next 2 3rd quarters.
 - 5. Unexcused absence from practice: Benched 3rd quarter. If you miss 2 practices in a week you forfeit performing during halftime.
 - 6. Missing part of uniform or equipment for event: Benched that game.
 - 7. Social Media Infraction: Benched following 3rd quarter and probation throughout remainder of the season.
 - 8. Discipline at school could result in action taken by the advisor/director. Poor behavior at school reflects on the program at large. Each situation will be looked at on a case-by-case basis.

NOTE: Any color guard member benched from a game or part of a game must sit with the advisor (and no one else) in full uniform the entire time. He/She must attend all practices in preparation for the game. If a color guard member is benched for MORE THAN 3 OCCASIONS, he/she will be removed from the section. Every attempt will be made to "punish" fairly and equally, and to make consequences of actions known ahead of time. Parents will be kept informed of problem situations. Severity of the action or repeated offenses may dictate harsher action.

- N. Because all situations may not be foreseen and thus outlined here, each will be dealt with in a manner decided upon by the advisor/director, with assistance from the administration, if deemed necessary.
- O. Poor conduct under any circumstance could result in warnings, being benched, and/or removal from the team. If it is in the best interest of the section that an individual or individuals be removed from a performance or from the section, this action will be taken by a decision of the advisor/director.
- P. A departure from the section reflects on all years after the departure. If a color guard member takes a leave of absence due to illness, grades, or family; that will not reflect on the following audition.
- Q. All color guard member will be given an Advisor/Director End of Season Evaluation. This will be added into the member's overall audition score for the following season. The evaluation will be presented to the color guard member approximately one week after the conclusion of the season.
- R. Leadership Expectations:



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1. Be a superior role model for your section:
 - a) as a student
 - b) as a section member
2. Have a superior attendance record:
 - a) practices
 - b) performances
 - c) school
3. Promote a positive atmosphere.
4. Treat every section member with respect.
5. Treat every section member equally.
6. Know every section member's name.
7. Always be fair.
8. Make every person feel like she is an important part of the section.
9. Listen to your section.
10. Fairly represent your peers' ideas and concerns to the advisor.
11. Bring any questions, suggestions, or concerns to advisor immediately.
12. Never defy or disrespect any advisor, director, or fellow color guard member.
13. Be willing to take on tasks assigned by advisor or directors.
14. Help new members understand all aspects of the section.

IV. UNIFORMS AND OTHER EXPENSES

- A.** Uniforms will be provided by the Amherst Marching Comets and, therefore, belong to the band.
- B.** Color Guard members must provide other personal items, such as shoes, tights, warm ups, etc.
- C.** Uniforms are to be kept clean, neat, and in good repair at all times, and may only be used for performances unless otherwise stated by the advisor (not practices or social events). Uniforms ruined, lost, or stolen will be replaced by that member at his/her own expense.
 1. Uniforms should be put on BEFORE applying any makeup.
 2. Using a "bib" to protect the uniform is imperative when applying makeup.
 3. When eating or drinking anything except water your uniform top MUST be covered.
- D.** If a color guard member quits or is removed from the team, he/she will be expected to return all uniform items within one week. No funds will be returned.
- E.** Attending band camp is a required activity as it helps to unite the section and prepare the members for the coming year. Fees are the responsibility of the individual.
- F.** Trips to any competitions will be paid for through the band. Meals are typically the responsibility of the student unless otherwise stated.
- G.** If a color guard member is delinquent in fee payment and has not made arrangements for payment, he/she will not be allowed to perform until his/her account is cleared.

V. REHEARSALS

- A.** Mandatory after-school practices will be held during the season including sectionals led by the advisor once school starts. Two missed sectionals in a week will equal one missed practice.
- B.** Summer practices will be held to prepare for band camp and learn choreography.
- C.** Additional practices may be scheduled as needed. This will be done with as much notice as possible.
- D.** Missing part of a practice for a test or other approved academic reason will carry NO penalty, but the member must get prior approval and make up what is missed.
- E.** Members must dress for all practices in athletic clothing unless otherwise notified. Clothing should be appropriate for the activity. Tennis shoes or guard shoes are required. This will carry the same penalty as a uniform violation for a game.



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- F. Members must **NOT LEAVE PRACTICE EARLY** unless given prior approval, except for family emergencies. Don't schedule work too early!

VI. REHEARSAL EXPECTATIONS

- A. No gum or candy at rehearsal.
- B. Members must bring a water bottle.
- C. Wear comfortable clothes that allow for movement. (No jeans. School dress code is in effect for all practices.)
- D. Wear sunglasses to help with glare.
- E. Bring sunblock, whether you think you need it or not.
- F. Be kind. There is no room for personal conflicts.
- G. Warming Up is not optional --- you must participate in order to perform.
- H. Tennis shoes with socks will be worn at all times.
- I. Section members and potential section members only at each rehearsal.
- J. No talking between routines. Don't talk while I'm talking. I will respect you as long as you respect me in return.
- K. Leave your "problems" at the door. Nothing you do in rehearsal will solve the boy/girlfriend problem, the homework problem, the work problem, or any other outside problem. In fact, bringing them in here will only create a section problem.
- L. Give 100% in everything you do.
- M. Remember that there are always eyes on you. Gain their respect through your work ethic.

VII. AUDITIONS

- A. Consisting of three, three hour clinics and one day for auditions.
- B. All routines will be created and taught by the graduating seniors. Technique will also be worked on at clinics.
- C. All students will wear black comfortable clothing and appropriate shoes on the final day of auditions.
- D. Judges will be determined by the advisor.
- E. Color Guard members will be ranked by total points earned through judge scores and evaluations.
- F. The number of members will be determined by the advisor (they will look for the natural break in the scores).
- G. Members will be posted at a designated time determined by the advisor. Only the color guard members who make the squad will be posted. They will not be posted by their name, but by their assigned number.