



## **Tompkins Band Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Does everyone participate in the marching band?**

Yes. Every member of the Tompkins Band participates in the marching band, as required by Katy ISD. One of the advantages of this is that after two years of participation in band, you will take care of your PE and Fine Arts requirements for graduation. We understand that many students and parents are nervous about marching band because it's unknown, however, you shouldn't be. We teach you everything you need to know to be successful and this will very likely end up being your favorite part of the year. Remember, every member of the OTHS Band was once in your position!

### **What ensembles/groups are in the Tompkins Band?**

There are multiple ensembles in the Tompkins Band and students are given the opportunity to perform at various levels, depending on their desire to do so. Every wind and percussion student will be placed in one of our four ability based concert bands after auditions in May and December. Crimson Pride members will be placed in the same class in the fall, then an ability based dance class in the winter. In the fall, all students participate in the marching band, even though they are split into ability based classes. We also have jazz band, a symphony orchestra (wind/percussion combined with strings from the orchestra), an indoor drum line, and musical orchestra. Placement in these ensembles is based on audition and students may only participate in them if they are also enrolled in a regular band class.

### **Can I participate in athletics or other activities while being in band? What about advanced classes?**

Absolutely! The Tompkins Band is represented in almost every other activity on our campus and we encourage students to participate in any group or activity that they are passionate about. Additionally, 84% of OTHS Band members are enrolled in at least one Pre-AP or AP course, while 49% are enrolled in at least four or more Pre-AP or AP courses.

Also, students are allowed to exempt band from their GPA during their sophomore, junior and senior years if desired. This allows students who are in mostly AP courses to not have their GPA negatively affected by the maximum four points that can be earned in a non AP course like band.

We believe every student should be given the opportunity to discover what they love to do in high school and want to help facilitate that discovery.

### **Can participating in band help me get into college?**

Yes it can! In addition to learning skills that will help you through the rest of your life (time management, dedication, work ethic, leadership, teamwork, problem solving, higher level thinking), colleges and universities have repeatedly said that students who are successful in school while also participating in an activity like band for four years are more likely to be successful in college. Because of this, admissions officers are much more likely to accept these students into their schools than students who do not participate in other activities. In fact, admissions officers from Duke, Rice, UH, Boston College, Northwestern and Vanderbilt held a session on our campus in 2018 to discuss this. If you would like to see the whole discussion, please search for “Illuminating the GPA Game” on YouTube or go to this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35ppDSWXvqg>

### **What is the time commitment for band? How much do you rehearse/perform?**

Band is split up into two main seasons. Fall is marching band, and generally requires the largest time commitment. However, the rehearsal and performance commitment is very reasonable and on par with most other activities of its size/caliber. UIL limits the after school rehearsal time of all marching bands to 8 hours per week with one additional hour per performance day. This usually means that we will rehearse 3 days and perform at one football game each week. In October, we will compete at 3-4 marching contests on the weekends.

In the spring semester, the after school rehearsal requirements are significantly lower. Each wind and percussion student is required to be in a concert band, which will mean about 2-3 hours of after school rehearsals each week. If students want to participate in more ensembles (jazz, indoor drum line, etc.), then the after school commitment will be greater. However, these ensembles are optional and students who need more time for other commitments are not required to participate in them.

### **That seems like a lot of time. How can I do band and maintain my grades?**

We expect band members to be successful in all of their classes and we take great pride in the fact that our students consistently rank at the top of the graduating classes and go on to high ranking colleges and universities. In fact, of the five OTHS graduating classes (including 2020), 9 of the top 50 graduates have been members (and leaders) of the Falcon Band. Our band members tend to be high achievers in everything they do and much of their success is **because** of band, not in spite of it.

One of the great things that students learn by being in band is how to manage their time efficiently. There is plenty of time in each day to do everything that needs to be done as long as you’re being productive during down times. Also, one of the advantages of being a part of an organization with students of this caliber is that there is a built in support system for students who may need additional help in one of their academic classes. Our older members actively work with and tutor other members, investing their time in the success of the entire band.

### **Are band members required to get a physical?**

Yes. All band members must have a physical on file with the band directors before marching band begins in July. You can get this done on a Katy ISD campus with other athletics students, your family doctor, or an urgent care. You will need to use the Katy ISD physical form and turn that in before marching band begins.

### **Does the OTHS Band travel?**

Yes! We take a spring trip almost every year and Katy ISD allows us to travel out of state every four years. In the past we have travelled to San Antonio, Dallas, New Orleans, and Orlando. In 2019, the Tompkins Band traveled to Hawaii as the first Katy ISD group to do so since the district changed the travel rules in 2018. Additionally, many of our smaller groups travel for performances and competitions around Texas and the rest of the United States.

### **What is the financial commitment for band?**

The OTHS Band has many expenses over the course of the year that are paid through fundraising and student fees. Some, but not all of these expenses, include instruction, purchasing new equipment, local travel, contest entry fees, and various marching band expenses. The OTHS Band Booster Organization works very hard to raise money to cover many of these expenses, and whatever is left that cannot be paid through fundraising is paid for through band fair share fees. There are also additional fees for indoor drum line for any student who chooses to participate. Additionally, there are some other required and optional supplies/fees.

We don't ever want money to be a reason why a student can't participate in band. If you need financial assistance, we are willing to work with you to come up with a plan for paying these expenses.

#### Required fees include:

Performance Day Meals (feeds your student at every game/contest in the fall)  
Supply Fee  
Piano Accompanist Fee (wind players only)  
Solo Entry Fee  
Stick/Mallet Fee (percussion only)  
Instrument Maintenance Fee (only for students who play school owned instruments)

#### These items are required, but may not have to be purchased every year:

Falcon Band Water Bottle  
Falcon Band Uniform Bag  
Falcon Band Spirit Shirt  
Falcon Band Uniform Shorts  
Viper Marching Shoes  
Gloves (winds only)

### **Are there fundraisers for band?**

As noted above, our booster organization is very active in raising money for the band program. We try to avoid making students do too much work in this, so we rely a lot on parent help. The Falcon Mum Factory, which is our biggest fundraiser of the year, requires almost year round support, so we need as many parents as possible to help with this. Even if you have no experience or don't consider yourself "crafty", there's something you can do. We also have carwashes, a mattress sale, mulch sales, a jazz crawfish dinner, and monthly spirit nights at local restaurants. All of this requires a ton of parent help and the more parents we get to work on this stuff, the less each parent has to do.

### **Can parents help? How do we get involved?**

Our band program does not function without the assistance of all of our band parents. We have a very active band booster organization that supports our band, including raising money for the band, feeding the students before performances, serving as chaperones on trips, building props, loading trucks, and many more things. Plus, volunteering is the best way to be in the action and see your student doing something that they love! If you are interested in volunteering, which we hope you are, please sign up for as many volunteer opportunities as you would like. Whether you can donate a lot of time or just a little, we need your help!

### **How is information communicated to students and parents?**

We work very hard to communicate effectively and efficiently to all of our band families through many different means (mostly electronic). Your best source for information is Charms ([www.charmsoffice.com](http://www.charmsoffice.com) school code tompkinshsband), where you will find our band calendar, band handbook, news and more. Weekly emails are typically sent throughout the school year, so please make sure that your email information is up to date in Charms and that emails through Charms aren't caught in your email spam filter. We also communicate through Remind101 (incoming freshmen students only can text @othsband24 to 81010 or sign up through the Remind app), which is mainly used only when we need to get out information to students quickly. Our band website is [www.othsband.org](http://www.othsband.org) and you can follow us on Twitter at @othsbandtweet. We also have a Facebook page that you can follow as well by searching for the Tompkins Band.