



Southmoore Guard New Member Guidelines 2018-2019

What is expected of me?

Much could be written about the expectations of our students. At the risk of oversimplifying, our staff simply expects each student to have an **outstanding attitude** about participating in guard. With a **great attitude**, all the following is possible:

- The student will **WANT** to improve and therefore will do so
- The student will **CHOOSE** to be at all required guard events and may show up to others as well
- The student will **MAKE CORRECT DECISIONS** because bad decisions hurt the guard
- The student will **WORK** to always give great effort into improving the overall guard
- The student will **SMILE** and infect all those around them with their great attitude meaning...
- Even when working hard, all will have **FUN** while learning to be great

The student with the great attitude will soon discover that the more they **GIVE** to the guard the more they will **GET** from being in guard. We simply expect everyone to have a great attitude. A less than superior attitude is simply not tolerated and not at all conducive to creating a great guard and overall learning environment

Attendance

There is no mystery to our attendance expectations; students who enroll in guard are making a commitment to attend **ALL** activities – pure and simple. Guard calendars are distributed well in advance (and are **ALWAYS** available at southmooreband.com) to help families plan accordingly. Procedures are put in place when an event must be missed due to unforeseen or abnormal circumstances. We expect students to adjust their schedules to ensure attendance at all guard events during the school year.

During the holiday months, it is understandable that students will miss rehearsals at times. We simply expect students to attend if they are in town during a rehearsal. We want our students to go on vacation, eat the great food at reunions, etc. and do not wish for the guard to cause families to miss these important activities. The rehearsals that occur after the holiday break, however, are the most vital and we therefore need our students to attend these rehearsals for their guard to be successful.

During the school year attendance is not optional. For instance, when one person is missing during a rehearsal practice, the problem is amplified many times over. It is very difficult to learn to march a show if there are “holes” instead of bodies on the floor. Those students who are at practice cannot figure out where to go because the people their drill relates to are missing and the people who are missing don't know where to go when they return. Time is wasted and the guard fails to reach its potential - everybody loses.

If your child **MUST** miss rehearsal or part of a rehearsal, please notify Ms. Wessel at swessel@cnpsschools.org at least 48 hours **PRIOR** to the rehearsal or 10 days prior to a performance.

Students are to avoid at all costs simply “ditching” a rehearsal or performance. This is completely unacceptable behavior in our guard program or in the “real world” and appropriate consequences will be administered that could include removal from the guard program.

Equipment

Your student will be responsible for taking care of all school equipment. Parents, please help emphasize the importance of taking care of our equipment and costumes. These are expensive pieces of equipment that you do **NOT** want to pay to repair or replace.

How do I fit guard into my Life?

Parents constantly ask our staff: “Does my student have enough time to be in guard” and the answer is a resounding...YES! There is a reason that our organization has the highest GPA on campus, the practical skills taught in guard are applicable to other academic subjects and life in general. To put your mind at ease:

- Students DO have time to do their homework. Often proper time management skills must be learned, but many of our students end up being ranked high in their class – they must have got their homework finished!
- Students CAN participate in other activities, even school sports. The guard staff will make time compromises to allow students to participate in other activities. Communication is the key...do not show up after a performance and say “um...I was at a chess tournament” we must talk BEFORE any potential conflicts. We currently have many athletes and club members in our guard.
- Many of our students have a job and attend all guard activities. It takes great communication with your employer, especially during marching season, but it is possible to hold a job and be in guard.

How Does the Weather Affect the Guard?

Rehearsal Attire

It is important to note that not having the proper attire is not a satisfactory reason for having a poor rehearsal.

- Students should wear comfortable, athletic clothes (no jeans) for all rehearsals.
- Bring water, preferably in a reusable container
- Eat a good meal or have sustainable snacks before attending evening rehearsals – a candy bar with a “Monster” Energy Drink does not cut it...
- The health of the student is the most important consideration; students who feel ill while marching are expected to stop marching, sit down and rest. The staff does NOT punish students for taking a medical break, however we DO expect students to prepare for rehearsal to avoid “self-inflicted” illness due to lack of eating, poor hydration, or improper clothing choices.

Rehearsals and Performances

Rehearsals are rarely canceled due to inclement weather since they take place indoors. Rehearsal formats may be altered, but the rehearsals are very rarely canceled.

Very rarely a winter guard competition will be canceled due to weather. Never assume an event is cancelled unless you personally hear a guard staff member announce an event is cancelled or you receive a text from the Remind guard account. Absences will not be excused due to an incorrect assumption that an event is cancelled.

Our staff is aware of the sometimes-serious nature of Oklahoma weather and monitors conditions at appropriate times. When severe weather is imminent, students will be moved to a safe location in our building or nearest structure. Please note that students are released to parents only when the imminent threat has passed.

Supporting Your Child and the Guard

Our staff desires that the parents and family will play an active role in your child’s participation in guard. Your son or daughter may be at the age where they seem to not want you around too much – but do not be fooled! They love it when you support their guard pursuits. Here are a few ways to help...

Come by and watch a rehearsal – You can learn a great deal about the work your student puts into guard by simply watching a rehearsal. Grab a lawn chair, a cup of ice water, and come on out. Please know that you are welcome to be at rehearsals (but do not expect us to converse much with you during rehearsal...we are busy!)

Attend the Performances – Nothing is much more heartbreaking than a kid who does not have someone special supporting them in the audience. Again, they will not necessarily ask you to attend a performance, but I have NEVER met a kid who was not thrilled when their

family members came and watched them “do their thing.” Certainly, we do not suggest that you must be at every performance cheering the guard on (although you may find following the guard is addictive) but please don’t take a negative approach to your child attending rehearsals and performances.

Become an Active Guard Parent – We need your help! There are a multitude of fun jobs to do that only adults can handle.

Allow Home Practice Time – Don’t practice until you get it right, practice until you can’t get it wrong.

Be Supportive – Please, be supportive – keep in mind that very few things can be as constructive to a child’s accomplishments, and thereby facilitate the success of the entire program, as a parent who fervently supports their child’s activities. Yes, having a child in guard may mean making some sacrifices – just as it does if they are taking dance, or karate, or piano lessons, or tennis lessons, or playing a sport, or just about anything else that is worthwhile. Please consider that they will not be children much longer, and the time they have to do these things that will enrich their lives will soon be gone.

Please, please do not become an enabler – if they want to miss a practice or (horrors!) a performance, make sure you don’t make it easy for them to bail out on the commitment they have made. As the winter season progresses, it sometimes may become easier and easier to let our responsibilities slide, and this is definitely not a road we want our children headed down. “Taking the path of least resistance makes rivers and men crooked.”

Addressing Concerns to the Guard Directors

The guard directors most definitely want to foster open, honest, and genuine communication with all parents and patrons. One of the most enjoyable roles of teaching is getting to know families. We also understand that occasionally you may need to address concerns directly to the directors. Most often, problems are easily resolved with direct communication, especially when teenagers are involved. We wish for concerns to be fully addressed and during times when we all can devote our full attention to the matter at hand.

Often guard directors seem to be much more accessible since you may see us during rehearsals, contests, and maybe even at Wal-Mart. During these events, we are working (and maybe even a little stressed), so therefore we simply cannot give your concern our complete attention. Occasionally parents may attempt to address concerns during these times; however, we respectfully ask that we schedule a separate conference. The conference should occur at a mutually agreed time and therefore please do not just simply walk in the office and demand an immediate conversation. The matter has a much better chance of being resolved when we can sit down together and figure out the situation.

In Conclusion...

Hopefully you feel very informed rather than overwhelmed after digesting all this information. Certainly, there is a great deal of particulars pertaining to participation in our guard program – this is because we offer so many exciting activities to our students! We are SO excited that your student has elected to participate; it will be well worth the time invested. Please remind your students that the more they give to the guard the more they will get from the guard.

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