



Parent & Volunteer Handbook

Welcome to the 2025 Colt Cadets!

All volunteers are also subject to the [Volunteer Code of Conduct](#). While this handbook will help you to know what to expect and how to care for your individual student/child, the Code of Conduct details expectations to ensure the environment is safe for all participants - members, staff, and volunteers.

Part 1: Parent Guide on how to set up your student for success in Colt Cadets
Part 2: Volunteer Guide to feeding and caring for the Colt Cadets on the road

Part 1: How to set up your student for success in Colt Cadets

We encourage you to dive in! Our goals are set up for you, the members, and the staff. Included are our guidelines and procedures for Cadets parents to help make your time with us more enjoyable, productive, and beneficial to the members.

We find the more everyone knows, the more smoothly things tend to run. Please take the time to go through this information as it includes answers to many questions. Familiarize yourself with the [Colt Cadets Member Handbook](#). Each member will receive a handbook and should know what is expected from them at all times. Please take time to review the handbook with your student so everyone understands our expectations.

Always remember we are creating a place for your child to be successful in new and profound ways. Success and learning occur through being able to make mistakes and learning it is okay to make mistakes. We expect a high level of responsibility from your child, and you will be surprised at how well they follow through.

Please help us and the membership by,

- **Offering to help the members, but not doing things for them**
- **Offering praise and suggestions, not criticism.**
- **Be encouraging and expecting, instead of requiring.**
- **Being positive and helpful, especially in times of inconvenience.**
- **Listening, following, and relaying staff instructions.**

Communication

The more we know, the better we can be. We will email as much information as possible. Daily schedules are posted on the door of the trailer every morning, and Slack, which is our primary app for communication between staff, members, and volunteers who are traveling with the corps.

ABSENCES need to be brought to the director's attention as early as possible, so rehearsal plans can be developed to accommodate a balance of each child's needs. Your student's consistent attendance is crucial to the success of the Colt Cadets. There are no backup players! When a student is missing, a piece of our competitive program is missing as well. Unexcused or unreported absences are not tolerated.

Please communicate via email or call the director prior to any absence. We obviously understand in the event of an emergency – just let us know as soon as possible so we can plan accordingly.

If you need to get in touch with us or your child:

Harlan Pfohl (Colt Cadets Director): 563-451-2194; harlan@colts.org

Jeff MacFarlane (Executive Director): 563-599-8553; jeff@colts.org

Colts Office: 563-582-4872; office@colts.org

The director carries a cell phone. If you do not get through, please leave a voicemail and we will call you back as soon as possible. **While we are on the road**, members do not always have open access to phones at shows or housing sites. We do allow cell phones on tour but ask members not to use them during rehearsals or when being given directions by an adult. The best time to communicate with a member is during a meal or travel time. Email is checked regularly and is the fastest way to most answers.

Slack:

Slack is an application that allows teachers to communicate with all of their students simultaneously. The director will create a Slack group for students and a group for parents to use during the summer. This will allow for students and parents to be notified of sudden changes in schedule, or in the event of an emergency. Simple instructions on how to receive these messages will be distributed closer to summer.

Things you can do at home to help before the summer season:



- Communication: does your student understand the schedule, expectations, etc.?
- Reminders to practice can help. It shows if they do not know their part.
- Help with packing if needed. Make a list together, and then let them pack everything so they can easily find things while on the road.
- Provide non-carbonated, non-caffeinated beverage options.
- *CRITICAL: Ensure they have lightly colored apparel, hat (no visors), sunglasses, 1-gallon water jug (Red for Brass and Percussion, Blue for Guard please), sunscreen, and two good pairs of athletic shoes for EVERY DAY (no high tops). We will provide a list of doctor-recommended shoes for drum corps activity.*
- *SPF-rated lip balms are recommended for all and especially for brass players.*

During Rehearsal

Please feel free to come and watch! We are a family activity and want you to be aware of what your child is learning and doing. We normally do a full run-thru of our program 30 minutes before the end of each rehearsal day. Check the whiteboard on the cook trailer in the morning for exact times.



Please help us by:

- helping your child understand the importance of being on time.
- being a great audience! Positive responses help students perform better.
- keep down conversations close to the corps during rehearsal and warm-up.
- not interrupting rehearsal to handle details with your child.
- encouraging healthy behaviors (sunscreen, water, eating all meals, hat, sunglasses, lip balm, footwear).

What can I do if I am unable to travel? **LOTS!!!**

Please take time to reach out to the corps director or the volunteer coordinator (ccvolunteers@colts.org) so we can match your time and talents with the support needed. You will see there are many tasks that must be accomplished to be a successful drum corps!

There may be times you see something you have hidden talents for. Just because we haven't asked for it to be done, does not mean we don't need it done. If you have ideas, let us know!

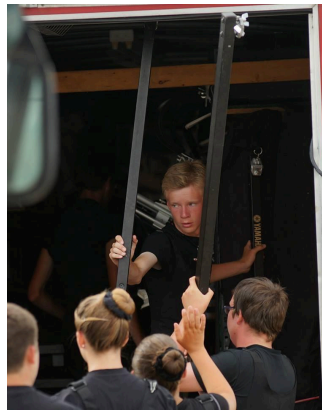
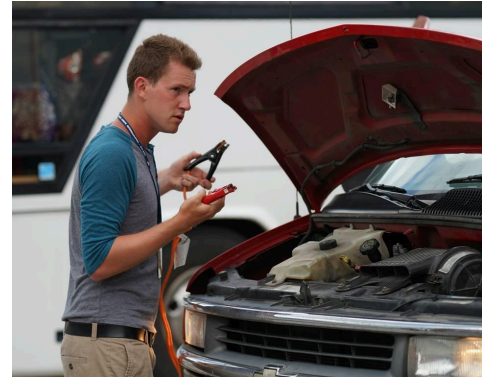


We would like to thank you in advance for volunteering your time and energy from home or on the road to support the Colt Cadets. Like any nonprofit organization, we depend on volunteers to help us be a success! The Colts organization would not exist without the considerable amounts of time donated by parents and friends. Most important are the personal rewards and benefits to children from involvement in their lives.

We are thrilled to have you aboard. Please reach out to the director (harlan@colts.org) or the volunteer coordinator (ccvolunteers@colts.org) if you have any questions about volunteering or how to ensure a successful and enjoyable summer for both you and your student. See you on the road!

Part 2: Volunteer Guide to Feeding & Caring for the Colt Cadets

“The Hardest Volunteer Job You Will Ever LOVE



The Basics

Remember to be flexible! Plans often change due to circumstances beyond our control. We work with the kids to go with the flow and ask adults to do the same. We are all role models. **On the road, we will find many inconveniences, but rarely a “problem.”**

It is important for you to recognize as a parent volunteer, you are a driver or a cook. We do not use the term “chaperone.” We work to build respectful and responsible students who do not rely on adults to pick up their slack. While students might require guidance and support, it is important they take responsibility for their own assignments, belongings, and behavior.

We do not go into any situation anticipating problems and we attempt to be as prepared as possible for any scenario. If you run into a situation you are unsure how to handle, please see a lead parent, director, or staff member so we can address the concern.



The daily schedule is always posted on the door of the food trailer - please get used to checking the door for schedule updates when you are with us. We will post as much as possible daily. Check the board regularly (at all meals) for any changes or updates.

All volunteers are subject to the Colts Youth Organization [Volunteer Code of Conduct](#).

Medical Care For Members

Medical care for members will be handled by a single assigned, qualified, and trained staff member. This person's contact information will be noted on all summer itineraries.

In the event the medical person is not present:

The Cadets' food trailer is the center of activity on the road, including many of those times that a member is not feeling well or injured. When you are out on the road with us, it is important to remember that you immediately become a parent to every member of the corps. Wear gloves if you have potential contact with body fluids. ALWAYS check for allergies.

We expect students on prescription medicines to be responsible to carry their own prescriptions and take them when needed (unless it is a more specifically controlled substance). If asked to assist a member with taking medication or offering a reminder to take medications, please refer them to the medical professional first. If it is an emergency situation or a trained professional is not available, please ask about allergies before handing out any medication, and make a note for the trainer about who took what medicine and when. Always feel free to point out when a medical supply is running low in any medkit.

A copy of each member's medical release form is kept in a binder on the trailer and in the staff van. When needed, only the individual's file or form is removed. An adult is sent to the hospital or care facility with any student and, in emergencies, may need to stay back with a member if they are delayed.

HEAT EXHAUSTION/DEHYDRATION IS A MAJOR CONCERN

Heat exhaustion and heat stroke: Know the difference! Heat exhaustion is a first aid issue, and heatstroke is a serious, life-threatening medical emergency. Both occur due to excessive fluid loss in a hot environment. Fluid replacement must occur all day. Please remember you are drinking for tomorrow today.

Treatments: (if heat exhaustion goes untreated it may progress to heat stroke)

- cool down with cool cloths on the forehead, back of neck, wrists, and ankles; ice packs on pulse points
- cool off in the shade or air conditioning, lay down, and elevate your feet 8-12 inches
- provide a sports drink whenever possible.
- provide saltines, bananas, pickles, or gummy candies.

Sunburn: Cool with a cold cloth, apply aloe and do not pop blisters, aspirin is helpful (Check for allergies!).

General aches and pains: Provide ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil, etc.) and heat or cold treatments. (Check allergies!)

Bumps or Bruises: “RICE” Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation.

Scrapes: Wash with soap and water. Cover with gauze or Band-Aid.

Nausea: Try Pepto-Bismol tablets (check for allergies first). If vomiting occurs, give them nothing to eat or drink for a short time. Start with water or clear, white, pop.

Diarrhea: Imodium AD and have them check back with you (check for allergies first).

Sore throat: Give pain reliever and gargle with salt and warm water solution 3-4 times per day. You can also dispense throat lozenges as needed. (Check for allergies first). Monitor sore throats to be certain they are not carrying strep throat. Check temperature throughout the sore throat episode.

Muscle spasms/cramps: Muscle spasms require potassium replacement and fluids. Bananas, pickle juice, or watermelon are recommended ASAP.

Placing direct pressure on the cramping muscle and gentle steady stretching of the muscle is also helpful. Give ibuprofen if not allergic.



When We Travel

We take pride in how well we care for our members, which is part of the Colt Cadets reputation within the activity. Part of why our program is a success is due to YOU!

Thank you!

We travel by convoy in the following order: lead vehicle, lead bus, 2nd bus, truck and trailer, and other support vehicles. We stick together (even with a wrong turn) and do

not allow personal vehicles between the buses and trailers for the safety of our members.

Those traveling with us as volunteers will get free admittance to the shows for volunteering on the road. **We distribute passes to adult volunteers and drivers before each show and collect them after each show.** If you are attending only a day of an extended trip, please buy a ticket to the show as passes are limited.

On the Bus

When possible, parent volunteers should expect to ride on the bus. At times, we will put overflow support in an extra van. Expect a butt in every seat as space is limited (do not expect to get a pair of seats to yourself).

While riding on the bus, we expect good behavior. We will not and do not expect you to tolerate swearing or inappropriate conversation.

Members select their seats at the beginning of the season each year, and seats in the front of the bus are saved for parents. Noise level tolerance is determined by the **bus driver**.



The bathroom on the bus should not be used – it needs to be kept for emergencies only. If you have an emergency, tell the driver first, and we may be able to stop.



“Lights-out” on the bus occurs 1/2 hour after we leave a show at night. Members need to stop talking 1-hour after we leave a show. This is important because “down-time” on the bus is often part of our scheduled amount of sleep time. Lack of sleep can affect our rehearsals and performances the next day.

At the Show and Housing Site

Members have assigned jobs while on the road. Accepting responsibility for these duties is part of what we teach in corps, so please let the members do those jobs. If you notice something is *not* being done, please find the member responsible for the task or notify a staff member. Drivers and co-drivers are expected to primarily worry about driving our vehicles and are not expected to assist in other areas (although, they often

may be able to – feel free to ask, please don't always expect them to be able to say yes!). Please allow these individuals as much quiet sleep as possible.

Drivers and co-drivers must rest during the day, so we can travel safely through the night. Volunteer CDL drivers must adhere to the same DOT rules and regulations as paid CDL drivers. Please do not confuse this with “laziness” or lack of wanting to help. If a driver is unable to assist with another project there is likely a reason why.

Any adult not designated as a driver or co-driver is expected to help as a cook.

Life As A Cook

There will be a parent assigned as “head cook” for each day who will delegate and divide responsibilities so no one is left out or confused. The head cook will typically be a veteran parent and their assignment will last between 3-4 days before a new head cook takes the reins. The head cook will work with the director to fit 4 meals into each day's schedule.



The following is a typical parent schedule:

MEAL 1 (Breakfast) - Prepared 1-2 hours before wake-up. Clean-up usually takes 1/2 hour. After Meal 1, prep for Meal 2 (lunch). Between meals is a great time for grocery shopping and showers. Shower 1 or 2 people at a time to ensure there is always someone at the truck.

MEAL 2 (Lunch) is around 12:30ish on normal days. Clean-up usually takes 1/2 hour. After Meal 2 - Prep for Meal 3 (dinner). Depending on the day, Meal 3 could be served at the housing site, or it might be served as a “Sack Meal”. If departing and serving Meal 3 at a new location, any advance prep work is incredibly helpful.

MEAL 3 (Dinner) – For the times we have Meal 3 as a sack meal, we will make sure to prep any and all food before Meal 2, so the members can pack themselves their meal prior to departing to the next location. All other times, the meal prep will be similar to Meal 1 & 2

MEAL 4 (Snack) - While we call this “snack” for slang, this is actually treated as a full meal. When at a remote location, we schedule approximately 90 minutes to serve, clean up and assist in loading the truck. After Meal 4, reload and secure the trailer safely for travel. We treat this as we would another meal.

Please remember menus are planned before we leave. We try to keep things as simple as possible. We typically serve within 20 minutes. Schedules are posted on the trailer. Ask the “head cook” or director if you are confused about a schedule.

FOOD! DETAILS. . . and Helpful Tips

Members are NOT to have carbonation or caffeine.

WATER: The kids will need filled water bottles at parades, during show warm-up, at the gate, and immediately following a performance.

PUNCH: We use 10-gallons of “Sqwincher” (Gatorade) drinks and water for all meals.

PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY: Available unlimited at all meals for anyone.

PICKLES: Available at all meals for anyone.

CEREAL: Set out as an unlimited option for every Meal 1.

MILK: Set out for Meal 1 with cereal, and offer with cups at Meal 4.

SECONDS: Seconds are only offered after everyone has eaten. Students are expected to reuse their plate and cup, rather than be given a new one.



KEEP IN MIND THESE THREE MANTRAS AT ALL TIMES:

- 1) **The members come first.** Making sure member needs are met is most critical.
- 2) **If they are hungry, feed them.**
- 3) **The cook truck should be the most welcoming place on tour,** not just for our own students, staff, and volunteers, but *for the entire activity.*

Parents should ALWAYS take time to eat and typically eat after the members. If a parent must eat before a member, that is fine, but typically the members and staff eat first because they have more limited time. **Use common sense here** (diabetics may need immediate food). Staff will generally eat with the members, but at times may need to eat first, and at other times plates should be made and saved for them. If you need a plate saved for you, please confirm with the head cook.



ALL parents should be able to see Colts and Colt Cadets performances. After the corps performs, cooks return to the truck to set out snacks. This means not all parents may be able to watch the final corps. The head cook will determine who will be responsible for taking care of Meal 4 setup and re-load.

REMEMBER SPECIAL DIETS!

Vegetarians, gluten allergies, and lactose intolerances are just a few examples of unique diets we have encountered with our members. We respect the medical needs of students and prepare a substitute dish if a student is unable to eat a certain meal. Specialty dietary needs are to be communicated at the beginning of the season. A student cannot spontaneously “claim” to be vegetarian simply because they do not like what is being served at a particular meal. There is always a peanut butter and jelly option. Due to the nutritional needs of our members, we are unable to sustain “fad” diets while on tour.

What is the kitchen like?

One might compare the Colt Cadets kitchen to something you might encounter while camping, except on a much larger scale.

Many of our menus revolve around pre-cooked items and only require assembly prior to warming them up. Our goal is always to provide a high-calorie and nutritious meal for all staff, students, and volunteers.

On the trailer:

- Emptying trash and doing dishes are EVERYONE's jobs.
- Cooks must wash hands and sanitize often. Use plastic gloves and please use good judgment and common sense when handling food. The last thing we need is 100 sick people.
- Label and write dates on leftovers going into the fridge or freezer.
- Make sure to use parchment baking sheet liners whenever baking directly on the large metal pans. This will save tremendous clean-up time and effort.
- Cooks need to follow the same rules as corps members when it comes to adequate nutrition and hydration. Don't skip meals and drink LOTS of fluids.
- Maintain a small supply of Ice Packs (Ziploc baggies with ice) in the freezer to be used in case of injury. There are also first aid kits on each trailer.



COMMON QUESTIONS

How do I get on the tour schedule?

Email the volunteer coordinator (ccvolunteers@colts.org) to be added to the volunteer calendar. You can find the [volunteer calendar on the website volunteer page](#).

How do I get on and off tour?

One way is to just leave and return with the Colt Cadets when they go on tour. Many parents will get on tour by getting dropped off at one show or housing site, and then getting picked up at another show or site several days later. Alternatively, if you reach out to the director, we may be able to coordinate picking you up, or dropping you off at an airport. Email us before booking any flights.

Can I bring my own vehicle on tour?

We do not recommend this. You will be awake all day and we drive through the night. Time traveling is time best spent sleeping. Let our drivers do the driving! If you must bring your own vehicle, please remember to drive in the back of the convoy, and that you will be asked to park in the spectator parking lot when we go to shows. If traveling in your own vehicle and staying with the corps, please remember there is an expectation to help.

Do we only sleep when we travel?

You'll also have a chance to sleep at the schools along with the rest of the drum corps. The typical arrangement is the floor of a classroom. Bring an air mattress or a foam mat to make the floor more comfortable. DCI has asked us to ban cots on tour as they can easily damage freshly waxed floors. Definitely bring a sleeping bag. Temperatures inside schools and buses vary from boiling to freezing, sometimes on the same night. Sleeping bags roll up quickly on the way out of town. Don't forget a pillow!

I want to volunteer, but going on the road just isn't for me, can I still help?

Absolutely! We need people who can volunteer part-time with us while the corps camps in the Dubuque area. We need help at all of our housing sites from June thru August. It is much easier to come and go during local/regional camps and eliminates some of the headaches of overnight travel (as these events tend to be extended stays in the same location).

Will I be able to spend time with my corps member?

Not much. The schedule is hectic and there is little free time for either corps members or volunteers. There may be times to watch rehearsals or catch members after a meal.

What about attendance at church services?

The schedule makes church attendance difficult, and often impossible for service. Please check the schedule and services before asking the director.

Will I be able to watch the competitions?

ABSOLUTELY! In fact, depending upon the timing and number of other workers, volunteers may be able to watch other corps as well. All assigned volunteers will be provided with a pass for free entry into the event. Because of the limited number of passes available, only volunteers on the volunteer calendar are guaranteed a pass.

Will I have much free time?

To answer this honestly, NO. Volunteering is a big commitment and the cook crew will not be successful without you there. There are a lot of people depending on you (the members, the staff, and other volunteers). You honestly might choose to spend the free time you do find on tour catching a quick nap before the next big event.

May I bring other children along with me?

This is simply not possible. We don't have the space, and you won't have the time. The same rules apply to pets, girlfriends, boyfriends, etc. The organizational policy is that all persons traveling with the corps (who are not members) must be at least 22 years of age. Exceptions must go to the director for approval.

If I want to drive, will you help me get my CDL?

Yes, to drive a bus or truck, we have the equipment to train you and will pay for your licensing. Although some of our drivers are volunteers, they are still expected to adhere to the same DOT regulations as professional drivers. Contact the director if curious.

Okay... I'm ready to help! How do I get started?

It's simple! Let us know your availability and how you are able to help by emailing the director. Please consider joining our [Colt Cadets Cooks, Parents & Volunteers Facebook group](#).

WELCOME TO THE COLT CADETS FAMILY!

