

TAKING PART WITH FOX CARNIVAL BAND

Your questions answered



What is a Float and a Mas Band?

A Carnival Band or 'Mas Band' is a costume band, not a musical band – i.e. a group of people wearing costume or 'masquerading.' To 'Play Mas' means to wear costume and dance, usually following a lorry, which holds the music. The 'players' are the children and adults playing Mas. Fox is a big band - we have up to 200 players.

What is going on a Carnival float like?

It is great fun! Even if you were previously not a fan of Carnival, a day on the float with Fox Carnival Band will change your mind, and you will be back again next year!

Do we wear costumes?

Not really. We believe that children and adults should have the freedom to move, so we have no large costumes. We also believe everyone should have the same costume - no one gets a special one! Therefore our costumes are the 'uniform' of all wearing the same t-shirt and every year we all carry something that we can move. This year our 'mas' is windsock fish attached to tall poles. We all wave our fish in unison, so the impact of our 'mas' is the impact of a whole shoal of fish. Our fish can be carried by children or adults, and by able-bodied and disabled people.

What if I can't dance?

Don't worry – you won't be able to stop dancing by the end of the day! The music is infectious and we all learn the moves as we go! It is easy with Fox as we simply follow the leader – i.e. our bandleader, Colin, who gets us all going! We don't rehearse beforehand, and build our 'choreography' on the road on the day.

Is it safe?

Adults must be responsible for their children all day and before we leave we go through rules for safety, such as how to climb on and off the lorry. Each Carnival Band has its own two police officers who accompany the float throughout the day, adding to safety and security.

I don't like the idea of taking my children into the crowds.

You will not be taking your children into the crowds. A float moves on the Carnival Route which is within the barriers where it is safe and un-crowded. So children have the freedom of the streets to move and dance or even to be pushed in a buggy

Do we have to pay?

Yes, but because we are funded by the Arts Council we are able to keep our cost low. Participation is £12 per person, which includes your t-shirt, a fish to wave for the day and all the food and drinks you will need. Under-fives pay £7, and we can do special rates for families who might find the cost prohibitive.

What if we get tired?

You can rest on the float – children love sitting on the float and being admired by the crowd! So do adults!

Is there food on the float?

We have a catering station on the lorry, complete with microwave, and we serve a variety of hot and cold food, fresh fruit and child-friendly snacks. We avoid fizzy drinks and we serve no fast food!

What happens if I need to go to the toilet?

We have one on the float!

How long is the day?

Meet at Fox at 10am, where you can customise your t-shirt, children can get their faces painted (some adults do too!) We 'dress' the lorry, have a practice in the playground, start to get to know each other, and we leave on the Float at 12pm. It takes most of the day to get around the route, so we usually get back to Fox between 6 and 7pm.

How can I help on the day?

No experience is necessary and there is a role for everyone. Because our players come from all over the UK, at the beginning of the day we don't all know each other, but that soon changes as the day goes on. Teamwork plays a big part in the Carnival experience. Adults help with face painting, serving food and drinks, holding the rope around the band, selling t-shirts, or just by dancing and bringing more joy

Can I get involved beforehand?

Yes please! We always need help with costumes, new ideas and planning!

Do I have to be part of the Fox School Community to go on the Float?

Certainly not! We welcome everyone to join us, especially new carnivalists, people who have never been to carnival, or people with young children who would normally find it difficult to negotiate the crowd at Carnival. No experience is necessary and you don't have to know everyone else – you will have lots of new friends by the end of the day!

If you would like any more information please visit our website
<http://www.foxcarnival.com> and download a registration form