



An Open Letter to New and Prospective Marching Band Parents



Dear New Marching Band Parents,

Welcome to Marching Band! We are so excited to have you and your student with us. Each of us once stood where you are now standing so I am going to go out on a limb and guess that the question pounding in your head and on the tip of your tongue is “What have we gotten ourselves into??!! Right?

Let’s just lay it on the line. Marching Band is a huge commitment. It requires a lot of time, a lot of hard work, and a lot of money. However, like anything worth doing, it is also worth every bit you put into it! The growth, leadership, commitment, sacrifice, teamwork, determination, improvement, and FUN that your student will experience during their years with the Marching Band will be life-changing and have been, for myself and my children, totally worth the price we paid, both literally and figuratively. I cannot think of better mentors, better peers, or better experiences and growth opportunities. I would most definitely do it all again. I am pretty sure you will feel the same way too!

That all being said, we know that these first few months will be filled with a lot of questions, probably some confusion, and hopefully a very limited amount of frustration. Let’s face it, there’s bound to be some frustration with anything that is new. This letter has been prepared in hopes that we can spare you some of those frustrating moments that could have been avoided “if you had only known then what you know now!”

- ✓ **MAKE SURE WE HAVE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION, ESPECIALLY YOUR EMAIL!** We communicate at least weekly with you by email. If you are not receiving these emails, we don’t have your accurate email. This is not desirable for you. Ignorance is NOT bliss. ☺ Please contact a member of the Booster Board or your student’s section leader to make sure you get added to the email.
- ✓ **READ THE EMAILS!!!** After a time getting weekly emails you may be tempted not to read them or not to read them all the way through. **READ THEM ANYWAY!** ☺ These emails may sometimes be long but they contain important information and sometimes things change (important things like call times, or performance times, or rehearsal details) so you want to be sure you get the latest information.
- ✓ **Posted Marching Band rehearsal times are FIELD TIMES.** This means that your student needs to be **ON THE FIELD** at the start time, and will not come **OFF THE FIELD** until the ending time. Translation: your student needs to be at the school about 15-20 minutes earlier than start time, and will need about 15-20 minutes after the end time to put away their equipment and make it to the car.
- ✓ **Color Guard is part of the Marching Band.** When you receive emails and information for the Marching Band, it applies to Color Guard as well. Usually specific information will be listed for Color Guard, Pit, Percussion, and Ensemble, but in general, if the communication is addressing the Marching Band, it is for all of those groups!
- ✓ **BE FLEXIBLE!** As mentioned above, sometimes things change! This is a part of life and most of us deal with change on a daily basis. Our Marching Band schedule and details are no exception. In general, our staff does a fabulous job at getting parents timely and complete information. Sometimes things change at the last minute or an adjustment is needed and a call time will change, or a meeting place may be different, or something may be added or taken out of the schedule. They do try to keep this to a minimum, but sometimes it is unavoidable. These adjustments are made smooth when we do all we can to be flexible!
- ✓ **You are needed!** Many hands make light work, but the work needs done either way. If everyone does something, it lightens everyone’s load! There are small jobs that will only take a couple hours, and leadership responsibilities as well. Whatever your talent, we need you, so see where you can help! Please help spread the load!
- ✓ **After concerts, performances, and competitions, cleanup is required.** Your student is expected to help clean up after concerts and performances and to stay until the trailer is unloaded and everything is cleaned up after competitions. **Please do not ask them to leave before the work is done-this is part of learning responsibility.** If you are there waiting in your car to pick them up, jump out and help and it will go that much faster! ☺

- ✓ There are some things that Band fees don't cover. Marching shoes and polos are additional. If your student's section chooses to do a section shirt or jacket, that is also additional (this is optional for sections and is decided by the students themselves.) Schools do charge a fee for spectators if you go to shows, so if you go to support the Band at a show, be aware that you will have to pay to get in. Most of the time the Band Boosters provide a meal to the **students** at competitions. Occasionally we are away for longer than one meal span, in which case they may be asked to bring money for a snack or a meal. This is rare but it happens. Parents should plan to purchase meals when at events as spectators. Purchasing and preparation of food for competitions is based only on Band Members and staff. The bottom line is that you very likely will be asked to pay for a few additional things along the way. Just a heads up.
- ✓ It's ok to invite your student earn their own fees. Really. It is. We know Marching Band is expensive, but these kids are hard workers—or will be by the time they finish Marching Band. ☺ With support from you and a little work ethic, your student can pay their own fees and in the process will be so much more committed to what they are doing because they worked to be there. A breakdown of how the fees are used has been provided and is available if you did not receive it. Fundraisers help pay for food at competitions and to offset additional costs of running the Band and its activities. Some fundraisers allow students the opportunity to raise their own funds. Others benefit the band as a whole. If you are confused about which fundraisers benefit which need, please talk to a member of the Booster Board. We pay the same fees you do, so believe me—we take how these fees are spent seriously!
- ✓ Your student will need support in developing strong study habits. The months of September and October are very full with rehearsals and sectionals and competitions. Students will need to manage their time wisely in order to stay on top of their school work. Term 1 ends during the Marching Season, so they cannot procrastinate or get behind on their work. Encourage them to do their homework on the bus to competitions or before rehearsal on late rehearsal days. Encourage them to get ahead where they can on light days and to do their homework on the day it is assigned instead of the night before it is due! While the rigor of the schedule can take a toll on academics, it does not HAVE to. We have many Honor students in the Marching Band, and many take AP classes and hold jobs etc. Time management is a must.
- ✓ Attendance at rehearsals is not optional! Marching Band is a “team sport” and much like a basketball team, or a football team, where practices are mandatory and missing practice would result in suspension from a game, unexcused absences from Marching Band rehearsals affect the whole band, and can result in loss of a spot in the show. If your student needs to miss a rehearsal, please fill out an absence excuse form and have your student turn it in to a drum major at least 2 weeks in advance so that the absence can be excused. Unexcused absences affect everyone as they cause breaks in formation, affect the band's ability to clean drill and music, and cause your student to miss important work and changes. Please do everything you can to make sure your student is always at rehearsal, and when they must be absent, please make sure to turn in an excuse form! If you run into an emergency where 2 weeks notice cannot be given, please have your student (or yourself) talk to a staff member or Mr. Mangelson as soon as possible.
- ✓ MySchoolFees.com is the website that Westlake High School uses for online payments. When your student is asked to make a payment for anything (fees, shoes, polos, etc.), you can make a payment in person at the Finance Office, or most items can be paid for via MySchoolFees. If your student still attends Middle School at Vista or Frontier, some items cannot be paid for online due to the fact that your student's records are not at Westlake. If we specify that a fee is listed as a PUBLIC fee, 9th grade students CAN pay online. If it is listed as a STUDENT fee, you will need to go to the Finance office to pay. To make an online payment, go to www.myschoolfees.com, select Westlake High School, and set up your account. You will need your student's student ID number in order to link to student fees. When in doubt, go into your account, navigate to the Band fees page, and see if the fee is available for online payment. If it is not, you will need to go in to the Finance Office to make your payment. Band Staff are not allowed to collect money, payments must be made online or at the Finance Office. Email a copy of your receipt to Shawna at sivins4@gmail.com or put a copy in the envelope on Mr. Mangelson's door. Always submit a receipt for band purchases and keep a copy in your records as well!

- ✓ The questions are endless I am sure. We will probably add to this letter as time goes on. The most important thing to know is that if you DON'T know, you can ASK! You are not in this alone. We have amazing parents, staff, and student leaders and there are always answers for those who ask. If you are confused or frustrated or just need information and don't know who to talk to, then give us a call. We can point you in the right direction.

Welcome to the family. We hope you and your student love it here. Please let us know if you need anything and please let us know how you would like to help. Together, we can make this an amazing year!

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Christie Wallace, Color Guard , christie.wallace27@gmail.com, 417-793-6507

Steve Gallafent, Communications, steve@compguy.com, 801-885-2333

Tawnya Mayo, Uniforms and Volunteer Coordinator, tawnyamayo@yahoo.com, 801-787-8261

Becky Barney, Band Food, beckybarney6@gmail.com, 914-439-7534

Janet Buchmiller, Section Parent Coordinator, buchmiller831@msn.com, 801-694-8308

Band Website: www.thunderband.com. Check the website often for updated Calendar, forms, fundraising, staff info etc.

Section Parents:

Guard	Aimie Furse	(801) 706-5093	aimiefurse@gmail.com
Flute	Emily Doman	208-589-0325	emilydoman01@gmail.com
Clarinet	Kathleen Free	801-916-6124	kathleenfree2@gmail.com
Saxophone	Jamie Adams	(801) 310-7532	jjjkadams@hotmail.com
Mellophone	Lisa McKay	801-828-0188	ourlittleones7@gmail.com
Trumpet	Diane Bradshaw	801-420-2311	waynebradshaw@yahoo.com
Baritone/Euphonium	Paula Moriera	891-641-6461	paulamyrealtor@gmail.com
Sousa	Taffi Pugh	208-989-2741	taffi.abp@gmail.com
Percussion/Pit	Rachel Bloxham	801-369-4026	bloxhams@gmail.com
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