

The Pride of Cougar Country...

THE WESTLAND HIGH SCHOOL
MARCHING BAND
HANDBOOK

Revised Spring 2008

Mission Statement

To provide Westland music students with an outstanding opportunity to perform quality music and shows while representing Westland High School and South-Western City Schools to the highest degree possible

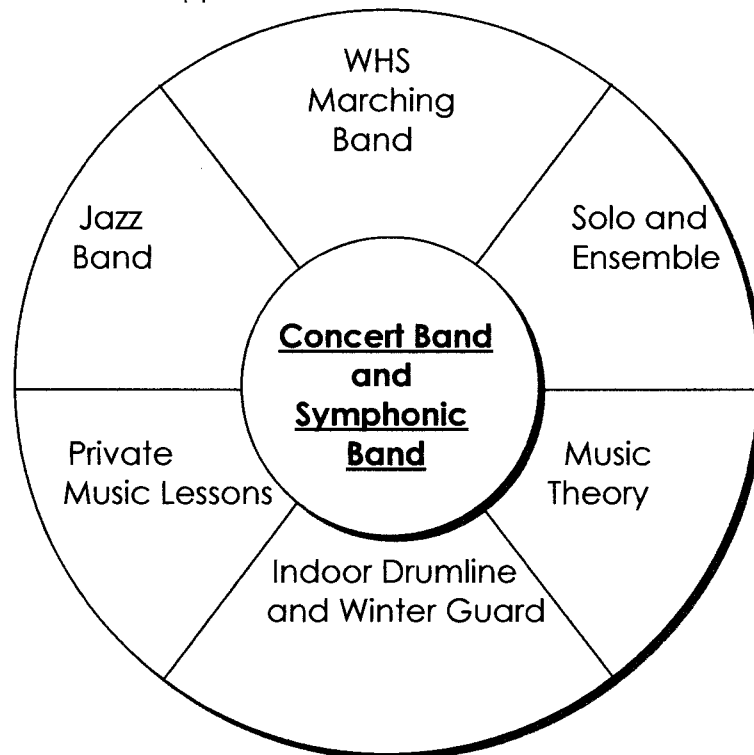
Courtney McCaleb and Brian Moore
Directors

Purpose

The purpose of the Marching Band is to supply a quality musical education for the students at Westland High School. In addition to being a primary musical ensemble at Westland, the marching band also provides school spirit and support at pep rallies, parades, football games, marching band contests and other school functions.

Throughout their time in the Westland Music Program, students will not only learn skills in music and marching but in communication, leading/following, individual responsibility, dedication, enthusiasm and respect.

In addition to the above, the ultimate goal of marching band is to provide students with knowledge to prepare them for concert band and symphonic band. It is in these ensembles that students display their talents and skills with more advanced music and rewarding performance opportunities.



Motto

"Don't be THAT band."

We encourage our Westland music students to set high standards for themselves as people. Often times people are complacent and accept mediocrity. In the Westland program, we expect more from one another. Because of this, we have adopted the saying "Don't be that band". When traveling, we often see bands that are unorganized, disrespectful, loud and weak as a performing organization. The Westland students have come to realize that these characteristics are easily identifiable and leave a bad impression on everyone "that band" comes in contact with.

Our students have also adapted this for individuals, "Don't be that guy/girl", deterring them from being the individual who sticks out from the ensemble in a negative manner due to a poor attitude, lack of commitment, forgetfulness, etc.

We hope our students will continue to strive towards personal excellence and adopt this saying for their overall approach to school.

Show

Every year a new marching band show is created that will expose students to interesting music. Every year the drill (field pictures) is constructed based on specific numbers of performers for each section. Also, the music is developed with the Westland Band's strengths in mind. Our drill designer and music arranger are paid to customize our show; we then add our finishing touches throughout the season to create a unique show that will leave a lasting impression on our audiences!

Schedule

Traditionally the marching band starts new member clinics in late April with the assistance of interested student leaders. Freshmen and student leader activities continue until the week of the Westland Area Business Association Parade (in late June or early July), when they are joined by the remaining members of the band to finish preparing for the parade.

By this point in the season, a detailed calendar should be available including all weekend contests and parades through the beginning of November. Once school begins, the band rehearses daily during school. Additionally, the band rehearses each week on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5-8pm. Every week an itinerary will be passed out and posted online for detailed information about report times for the Friday football game and the Saturday parade or contest.

For itineraries, schedules and calendars throughout the season, visit the band website at www.westlandbandboosters.com.

Attendance

Each time a student misses a rehearsal or performance, the entire ensemble is affected in a negative manner. Because of this, the following attendance policy has been put into place:

1. Band Camp is mandatory for all students. It always takes place the first full week of August, Sunday through Friday.
2. All students are required to attend each parade, football game/post game show and contests.
3. Each student is expected to participate in every rehearsal.
4. In the event that the student is absent from school, the student would be excused from rehearsal that evening.
5. Absences
 - Excused absences include but are not limited to sickness, family emergency, medical treatment, family vacations and other unique opportunities/situations*.
 - Unexcused absences include but are not limited to work**, homework and any non-medical absences not approved by the directors.
6. In the event that a student misses a Thursday night rehearsal and it is not excused, the student may not be permitted to participate in the performances that weekend, but would still be required to attend.

*Included in the information packet is the rehearsal excuse form. Please fill out a form and submit it to the directors at least two weeks before non-medical absences. The directors will then determine if the absence is excused. **Students who have jobs should take two calendars, one to keep and another to provide their employer.

Expectations

Because students are representing themselves, their families, their school and community, the students are held to high standards. Below are some of expectations we would like to highlight:

SHOW RESPECT

Respect yourself. Respect others. Respect the band traditions, facilities, equipment, and uniforms. This includes listening to directions without talking and knowing whether to lead or follow.

BE PREPARED

Band members are responsible for doing their best, for working on their individual skills, and for PRACTICING. All equipment must be brought to rehearsals as requested.

BE ON TIME

Students should arrive at the building 15 minutes before the rehearsal is scheduled to be ready to start on time. If you count on someone else to get a ride to practice, tell them the time you have to BE THERE is 15 minutes before the rehearsal begins. With this concept, you will be prepared physically and mentally to begin the rehearsal. You also will have a cushion of safety if there is extra traffic or if you are running a couple of minutes behind.

BE READY TO WORK

Our rehearsals consistently start the same way. This is to help students mentally and physically focus to work their hardest to improve and learn new things. As much as marching band is "fun", our purpose is to improve ourselves as musicians and to better ourselves as a group.

Discipline

Music students are held to the highest standard out of any group of students in the building. Our administration, faculty and coaches have great respect for the music students and their work ethic. Students in the band program are expected to follow all schools rules outlined in the Westland High School Handbook.

Any major violation of school rules will be taken up with the Westland administration. Insubordination or lack of respect towards our staff, chaperones or directors will not be tolerated.

All behavioral problems will be dealt with according to the student handbook, under the section of "Student Code of Conduct".

Specific violations are outlined below:

1. A student shall not by use of violence, force, noise, coercion, threat, intimidation, fear, passive resistance or any other conduct cause disruption or obstruction of any lawful mission, process or function of the school.
2. A student shall not cause damage, destruction, or theft of school or district owned or private property.
3. A student shall not intentionally cause physical injury or behave in such as way that could threaten to cause physical injury to any person.
4. A student shall not possess, handle or transmit any object that is or could be considered a weapon, drug or intoxicant at any time.

Band Conduct

Rehearsal

1. Be prepared to start rehearsal at the designated time. Arriving as rehearsal is starting will qualify as late.
2. Be attentive. Stay in the rehearsal even if your section is not being addressed.
3. Do your best to improve at every rehearsal, practice or sectional.
4. Don't make excuses. "Some find an excuse, others find a way."
5. Be respectful to your peers. "Treat others the way you would like to be treated."
6. Drink a lot of water, even if you are not thirsty. You can easily become dehydrated when it's nice or even cold outside.
7. Know the chain of command and follow it.
8. At the beginning of the season rehearsal etiquette will be discussed. Be sure to listen carefully and follow the procedure throughout the season.
9. Move quickly.
10. Stay positive.
11. Do not talk while you are receiving instructions either on the field or in a sectional.

School Buses and Coach Buses

1. Adult chaperones and bus drivers are to be treated with complete respect. Any form of insubordination will be dealt with through the school.
2. Abide by the requests of the bus drivers. Some allow food and drink, while others allow no drinks (including water!). We expect your complete cooperation.
3. Keep the aisle clear of bags, bodies and legs. It is important that the bus driver see out the back window all the time.
4. Remain seated on the bus while it is in motion. Once we arrive at a new location, remain on the bus until you receive instructions from a director.

Contests

1. Remember that you are representing Westland every time we are in public. Be sure to be courteous and respectful to everyone you come in contact with.
2. Once we are in uniform, we travel silently. We must maintain focus as we travel from warm-up locations to the performance field.
3. When in the stands (with or without the rest of the ensemble), be sure to be quiet, respectful listeners. Again, you never know who you are sitting next to!

4. During awards we sit/stand together as a band. If we are in uniform, we are quiet and at parade rest. If we are not in uniform, it is expected that we are quiet and listening intently to the entire award ceremony.

Football Games/Parades

1. Keep in mind that our major purpose in attending the football game is to support our team and interact with community members!

2. Once arriving in the stands do not sit or remove hats/gauntlets until you are asked to do so.

3. Good bands are organized at all times. Please remember to follow procedures at all times so we can be seated and ready to play as soon as possible.

4. Ask to use the restroom before leaving the stands or getting a drink of water. Use the buddy system at all times.

5. Expect the unexpected! Although signs are used to communicate with the ensemble, it is important to be aware of your surroundings and the game.

6. It is expected that you sit with your section throughout the game. Water breaks will be issued by sections.

7. We only play as an organized ensemble. Please do not play on your own. Small ensembles may ask for permission to play fanfares, "samba" or other traditional band cheers.

8. Return from third quarter with no less than 1 minute on the game clock. Be sure to watch carefully, the minutes move quickly when you visit with friends and family.

Music and Marching

"I don't expect perfection, I expect improvement."

It is expected that every student work to improve at every rehearsal. All students are expected to memorize the *Fight Song*, *Alma Mater*, *Star Spangled Banner* and the entire marching band show. Throughout the season, students may be asked to "check off" small portions of the show by performing it from memory. Each week, leaders and directors are available before practice for help in learning and memorizing music. Younger students should take advantage of help early to ensure they are making the best contribution to the ensemble that they can.

Leaders and directors are available for assistance. Just ask!

Assessment

Throughout the season, students may be asked to play or march individually or in groups to assess the improvement each student has made. Examples of assessment may be playing the fight song from memory, performing a particular marching/guard work sequence, executing a new warm up, etc.

The purpose of each assessment may vary. Some may be for a grade; others may be to gather additional information for future rehearsals. Others may be to emphasize the importance of individual effort and performance within a large group.

In some circumstances, third quarter privileges may be revoked if performance responsibilities are neglected.

Lockers

At the beginning of every season, each student will be assigned his or her own band locker. This will be determined by the directors. In order to keep our band room looking clean and organized, each student is expected to do the following:

1. Close and lock the door to lockers before and after rehearsal.
2. Store instruments inside their cases, with the latches locked.
3. Store books and binders neatly inside the locker.
4. Take home and wash clothes once a week. Clothes will not be permitted once marching band is complete.
5. Keep food or opened beverages out of lockers. No food or opened beverages are permitted in lockers, as these could lead to insect or mice infestation.
6. Keep locker decorations tasteful and to a minimum.

Please Note: Starting in Fall 2008, locker inspections will take place once a week for a grade. Each violation of the above items will result in a five (5)-point deduction from the student's grade.

Grades

Students in marching band earn a grade for their efforts in the organization. Students that attend band activities on time, display a strong work ethic, learn their music/drill and show respect will have no trouble earning "A" credit. However, students will be graded in the following areas, which are used to determine six weeks grades:

1. Attendance
 - a. Each unexcused absence from rehearsal deducts ten points from their grade.
 - b. Any unexcused absence from a performance (football game, parade or contest) will be an automatic deduction of two letter grades.
2. Music and Marching
 - a. Each student will perform a series of short excerpts for a staff member or student leader. Each assessment will be out of 15 points. **Please remember that students can always ask for assistance from their leaders if they need assistance preparing!!**
3. Behavior and Lockers
 - a. Students that have frequent behavioral issues within the ensemble will suffer point deductions which will be determined by the director(s) and/or Westland Administration.
 - b. Student lockers will be checked one a week for a grade. Please see note above.

Marching Band Uniforms

Our current jackets, hats and gauntlets were purchased in the spring of 2007. It is expected that students take proper care of their uniforms and follow the instructions of the "Wash Mom", directors and leaders in regards to care of their uniform.

Helpful hints and requests from the Band Boosters and Directors:

- ✓ Hang your uniform (pants first) at the end of every performance.
- ✓ While wearing your uniform, avoid mud and water.
- ✓ Be sure to use extra caution while wearing your uniform and eating. If you get something on it, tell a director or booster parent.
- ✓ Do not store your marching shoes inside your garment bag.
- ✓ Under your uniform, it is expected that you wear a black shirt and plain black socks (should be taller than ankle length).

Chain of Command

Just as in any large organization, a chain of command must be present in order to maintain order and get things accomplished:

Marching Band Director



Assistant Marching Band Director



Staff



Drum Major(s)- Head student leader(s)



Section Leaders- Overall section leader, specifically in charge of music/playing



Squad leaders- Leaders specifically in charge of marching



Members

Students should remember to follow the chain of command when having a problem addressed or when asking general questions.

Student Leaders

The purpose of student leaders is to provide members with role models. These student leaders should display qualities of an outstanding band member. Student leaders are chosen during the spring. The audition process includes assisting the directors at new member clinics, having two teacher evaluations completed by a non-band director, performing an audition and completing an interview and essay form.

The lists below should provide insight about the purpose of student leaders in our band.

What should student leaders be EXPECTED to do?

- ✓ Be a role model by being a great member
- ✓ Communicate to members – phone calls, emails, reminders, etc.
- ✓ Perform basic music/marching check-off's
- ✓ Give extra help to members
- ✓ Be supportive of members
- ✓ Take ownership of their section and call for sectionals when they are needed.
- ✓ Plan small group informal social events
- ✓ Provide support to the directors and staff
- ✓ Offer to help with extra duties and activities

What should the student leaders NOT do?

- Be anything but supportive of the band program and staff
- See themselves in a position of power
- Do anything different than the instructional staff or contradict them
- Expect any special treatment for being a leader
- Be unprepared or late
- Show lack of respect to anyone
- Be egotistical or self-centered
- Be negative or pessimistic

Instruments/Percussion and Guard Equipment

School owned instruments and equipment are to be respected. This includes gentle handling, putting the instrument/equipment away after use, closing and latching instrument cases for safe storage and notifying a staff member when damage has occurred or when repair work needs to be done.

Personal instruments are to be taken care of and maintenance repairs should be performed once every year to keep the instrument in good working order.

The list below is to provide information on long term care supplies that should be used on a regular basis on both school and personal instruments.

Trumpets, Mellophones, Baritones and Tubas:

- valve oil
- slide grease
- a soft polishing cloth
- cleaning "snakes"

Clarinets and Saxophones:

- a reed box of blue box Vandoren reeds
- a cleaning swab
- cork grease

Trombones:

- Small spray bottle for water
- slide grease
- cleaning rag

Flutes and Piccolos

- a cleaning rag
- cleaning pole/head joint adjuster

Transitions to Concert Season

Auditions for concert bands will take place the week following the last marching band performance. Auditions traditionally take place during band periods. Music for auditions is passed out the last week of marching season or earlier to provide ample time to prepare their audition.

During the audition, students will be asked to play the excerpt(s) from the audition sheet as well as scales and possible sight-reading.

At the conclusion of auditions, band students will be placed in one of the two concert bands at Westland. The placement is determined by their performance on their audition.

It is expected that each student take their individual audition very seriously and prepare to the best of the ability. Unfortunately students will not be given "second chances" for their audition. Under no circumstances should the upperclassmen assume they will be in the same band as they have been before. Each year presents new challenges.

Additional information on concert band will be provided at the end of marching season.

Contact Information

If at any time you would like to speak with the directors, please contact us. We are available by phone, email or for brief meetings after rehearsals. To access information about upcoming events, fundraisers and more, you can visit the band booster website at www.westlandbandboosters.com

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Westland Band Handbook Agreement

I, _____ have read over the handbook and understand what is expected of me as a member of the Westland Band organization. I understand that my attendance is crucial to the development of the ensemble, that all school rules are followed during band rehearsals and activities and that my behavior directly reflects myself, my friends, my family and Westland High School.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date