**Marshall County**

**High School Band**



Band Member Handbook

***Note from the Director***

The purpose of this handbook is to inform and educate the Marshall County High School Band Students and their Parents of the educational opportunities, as well as the responsibilities and expectations, which are required of each band member in order for them to be a member of this organization.

A quality Band Program offers students many ways to grow academically, emotionally, physically and socially. As we keep an eye on pride and high quality in our music and responsibilities, students can expect to see positive results in the development of their spirit and true enjoyment of life. A great motivator, Vince Lombardi once said, “The quality of a person’s life is in direct proportion to the commitment to excellence.”

Our goals are similar to Mr. Lombardi’s statement. It is our hope that our students will learn to strive for high quality and possess a desire for excellence. Throughout the school year, we as Band Directors will seek high standards of accomplishments in order to obtain the best educational success for our students. We look forward to working with all students and parents in building on the extraordinary educational organization that our students and staff have created.

***Rod Harden***

***Director of Bands, Marshall County High School***

***Tara Thorne***

***Color Guard Instructor, Marshall County High School***

***Band Membership Requirements***

To be a member of the **Marshall County High School Band,** the student:

* Must agree to and comply with the terms of this handbook.
* Must complete and turn in the “Band Membership Agreement” located on the band website. (marshallcountybands.weebly.com)
* Must complete and turn in the “Band Financial Contract”, also located on the band website.
* Must be enrolled in band class.
* Must comply with all rules and regulations for the organization and school.
* **Must attend ALL practices, performances, and other required functions.**
* Must remain in good standing throughout the school. You must stay out of trouble – both from an academic and disciplinary standpoint. Illegal drugs and alcohol are strictly prohibited. Students caught with either of these substances will be suspended from school, turned in to the authorities, and will be removed from the band program.

***Marching Band***

The MCHS Band performs at all football games (home and away), parades, contests and other various performance opportunities.

In order to prepare properly for marching season, all band members are required to attend band camp during the last two weeks of July. After camp, we will have regular after school practices throughout the fall. A complete camp and practice schedule will be in the band room and on the website. Please schedule vacations around these required camp dates and rehearsals.

This is a competitive marching band that will seek to set high standards in pursuit of both group and individual goals. **Students are expected to be present at all practices, performances, and functions.**

The rehearsal schedule is normally set well in advance, allowing students to plan other activities and obligations around the established schedule. All work schedules must be set around band practice and work is **not** an excusable reason for being absent. This is also true for dental and orthodontist appointments. If at all possible, please schedule medical appointments on days we do not practice.

Plan to arrive well in advance of the beginning of the rehearsal. Do not try to sneak in at the last second. It is essential that we make efficient use of the time we have. This can only happen when every band member is present and working to improve. The band member that misses rehearsal cannot improve, and the other band members around them have a less effective rehearsal due to absence.

**Rehearsals are never cancelled due to inclement weather.** We do not usually rehears outdoors in the rain, unless it is just drizzle or intermittent light rain. In the event of steady rain, we will rehearse indoors and go out at the first opportunity.

Students should dress for the weather and always wear appropriate rehearsal attire. Not having the proper attire is not a satisfactory reason for having a poor rehearsal. Students must wear tennis shoes and socks for rehearsals. This is important in that the style of marching step we use requires that the foot and ankle be permitted to move freely.

It is also required that all students **bring a water bottle or sports aid drink to all marching band practices.** Hats, sunglasses, sun block and a towel are permitted and highly encouraged.

**The Director should be notified IN ADVANCE** **if a student is going to be absent from a rehearsal or performance.** Absences from band rehearsals or performances are unexcused unless due to (a) personal illness, (b) death in the family, (c) an emergency, or (d) special permission of the Band Director obtained **in advance** by the parent/guardian. Students must exhibit consistent responsibility in these areas. All medical absences MUST be accompanied by a doctor’s note. **Absences for any reason may result in the lowering of their grade and possible removal from the band.**

***Concert Band***

When marching season ends, concert season begins. Students will begin preparing for several concerts throughout the year and begin to work on musicianship and ensemble techniques. The concert band is a continuation of the learning process and helps reinforce what possible shows can be done the following year.

Each student is responsible for having his/her music and instrument at each and every rehearsal. There may be instances when after school rehearsals are needed. These rehearsals will be scheduled and students will be notified **at least two weeks in advance** to ensure transportation is arranged.

In addition to Concert Band, members are highly encouraged to participate in MTSBOA Mid-State, Solo & Ensemble, and many other honor band opportunities. These clinics help reinforce the lessons and teaching in the classroom and give the student an opportunity to be taught by clinicians throughout the country.

Members are also encouraged to take part in Jazz Band/Combo after school to broaden their musical talents. The Jazz Band/Combo will play music from various genres (jazz, pop, Latin) and will also perform at the concerts and other opportunities as they arise.

***Schedules & Agendas***

Prior to all football games and performances, students will be informed of the time they will be required to arrive and time when they can expect to be picked up afterwards. These times will be announced ahead and posted on the band website and board in the band room. It is each band member’s responsibility to inform his/her parent/guardian(s) of these times.

Please check the band website at marshallcountybands.weebly.com for additional information. Not only will it have a calendar for events and practices, you will be able to print out any of the forms needed for your student. It will also have pictures of the high school band at concerts, competitions, events and football games. We plan on posting videos of concerts and other events throughout the year. If you have some picture that you wish to share, please see the band director on how to do this.

Home games are over at roughly 10pm. Your child will be released once **ALL** equipment has been unloaded in the band room. Times will be announced when we will return to school from away trips. Please have your rides here at the school. We want to go home too!!!

Contest trip agendas and maps are usually available in the band room by Wednesday or Thursday during the week of the contest. Parents are encouraged to come into the band room and pick up an extra copy. These agendas provide all of the information that parents and students will need to know for contest days. This includes the meeting time for the day, eating information, time we arrive back home, etc. These schedules will help parents and students plan accordingly.

Contests, festivals, and other adjudicated activities are important features of the **Marshall County High School Band** program. It is through these activities that obtain valuable feedback about our progress as individuals and as a program. Although we never “live or die” by any one judge’s or any panel’s opinion of our performance, it is important that we learn the value of giving maximum effort and standing by the results as our best possible effort that day.

Competitive performances are packed with emotion. Because of the amount of time, work, and discipline required to produce award-inning performances, we develop great camaraderie within the organization. We share hardship, discomfort, fatigue, oppressive heat, chilling cold, long bus rides, disappointment, tears, success and joy. We share achievement!

Along with these emotions goes a high level of tension, which often causes students to react immaturely. We learn to avoid these normal pitfalls and to channel our energy and attention toward the goal of performance excellence and the ultimate success that will follow.

The **Marshall County High School Band** stands with silent pride, as scores are announced, and graciously accept the results, regardless of the outcome. We show our appreciation and respect for those who have earned the right to score ahead of us and gracefully accept our own successes.

The Band’s image is based upon each individual. Our public reputation is based upon our appearance, our actions, and our projection of pride and organization. It is the responsibility of each Band Member to ensure that we present the best possible image at all times.

***Classroom Procedures***

All students are to be inside the band room before the tardy bell sounds. At 5 minutes after the bell, class will begin. At this time, each student is expected to be in their seat with instrument, music, stand, a PENCIL, and any other necessary materials. There should be silence in the rehearsal hall when the conductor gets to the podium.

Warm up is a very important part of each rehearsal. This is when we focus on the fundamentals of our playing so that we may improve both as a group and as individuals. A daily rehearsal schedule will be posted on the board in the band room. Students are expected to be prepared for each rehearsal component as it comes to the schedule. Inability to comply with these requirements may result in grade deductions. Let’s make our class time productive.

**Brass players** should have all necessary mutes. **Trumpets** should have a straight and a cup mute. **Reed players** should have at least one (1) spare reed at their seat during rehearsal. Ideally, you should have four to five (4-5) reeds that all play and that you rotate using from day to day. Your reeds will last longer and you will get better play from them if you do not use the same reed all the time form the day it is new until it is worn out. For guidance on reed selection, please see the director.

**Percussionists** should have a pair of Vic Firth SD-1 Snare Drum Sticks, Innovative Percussion IP240 Yarn Mallets and Vic Firth General Timpani Mallets during concert season. During marching season, make sure you have all of the required equipment needed to perform on your assigned instrument.

Cases should be left in the instrument room or around the walls in the rehearsal hall during rehearsal. At the end of rehearsal, make sure you put **ALL** of your equipment away. Instruments should be put in the instrument storage room until time to take home for practice. Students should take their instruments home to practice every weekend and a **minimum** of two nights a week.

Percussion equipment is to be put away at the conclusion of each rehearsal. Timpani and keyboards, for which there are covers, should be covered. Small equipment should be put in cases (if available) or returned to the appropriate storage area.

Color guard equipment should be put away after each rehearsal in the designated guard storage area. No color guard equipment should be left lying around the band room or other areas without prior approval.

Talking during rehearsals should be kept to a minimum. Talking should always be about music we are studying and should never be a distraction to the conductor or other students.

**Do not leave money, purses, wallets, or other valuable unsecured. The band room is not always locked. The band is not responsible for lost or stolen items.**

**Do NOT leave class work, books, or backpacks in the band room when it is not your class time. The band room is NOT your personal locker!!!**

***Grading Procedures***

Band is a unique course at Marshall County High School. It has curricular requirements, just as any other academic discipline. However, it also has out of class time requirements. The strength of our band program is the consolidation of these requirements into one performance based, academic course of study. The level of commitment from each individual student is the driving force behind the organization and is reflected in the level of achievement reached by the individual and the program. Outstanding work and effort is rewarded and is reflected in individual grades.

Band is a learning activity. Rehearsals, whether during or after school, are the means by which students learn, and their very nature cannot be made up or reproduced.

Therefore, it is imperative that students be present unless the absence is absolutely unavoidable. Excessive rehearsal absences will undoubtedly affect a student’s performance. Although we frequently function as conductors, we are primarily teachers responsible for the musical aesthetic education of each student in the band program. This is the reason we are absolutely insistent upon each student’s daily participation. Rehearsals are not optional, and are reflected in the student’s daily grade.

Performances are viewed as major tests. A performance is a learning experience that cannot be duplicated in a rehearsal hall or practice room. The level of concentration required in a public performance assists each student in developing an insight into his/her own level of performance. A Performance is an important evaluative tool, allowing comparison of a student’s performance in relation to classroom objectives presented and with past performances.

Absences from performances are only excused in the event of an extreme emergency: serious illness or hospitalization of the student, death in the family, religious holiday, or other reasons deemed excusable by the Directors. **All absences from performances or rehearsals must be approved by the Band Director, *IN ADVANCE.*** Unexcused absences may result in the student being placed on an alternate status or dismissed. Absences from a class must follow the policies and procedures set by Marshall County High School.

Daily Music Theory work is also a part of the student’s grade. These lessons will occur during rehearsal time and provide students an insight into the inner workings of music. Through this study, students will gain a better understanding of how music works and thus lead to greater understanding and more proficient performance. This work will consist of in class lessons, homework, quizzes and tests.

Taking care of responsibilities is also a part of the learning process and is reflected in the student’s grade. These responsibilities include having all uniform parts ready for performances, with the uniform in top shape every time it is worn. Having all needed materials, instrument and accessories, in top working condition and ready for practices and performance is also part of the grading process. Student’s grades will also reflect performance in turning in forms, payments, etc., on time, unless approved in advance by the Band Director. In order for the band to operate efficiently, every member must do his/her part in this area. Tolerance for student lack of responsibility will be **very low**.

Finally, we take our jobs as Band Directors very seriously. The Band, as an organization, provides a medium through which students progress academically, musically, physically and socially. Musicianship, attitude, attendance, punctuality, conduct, and a desire for excellence are absolutely expected from each member of the Marshall County High School Band. Therefore, individual practice and preparation are essential. No other discipline in education requires the high level of achievement from all participants, as does musical performance. Through the level of commitment required, we hope to better prepare our students for the responsibilities encountered throughout their lives.

***Attitude***

Those students who have a positive mental attitude, regardless of the individual skills, will always have a place in the Marshall County High School Band.

**Regardless of your ability, if your attitude is not positive, if you are not doing your personal best to make the group successful, you should not be a part of this organization.** In fact, students who do not project an attitude that is **positive and cooperative** will be given the opportunity to change their personal perspective or else leave the organization.

Those who have pride in themselves will generally project a positive mental attitude. Characteristics of a positive mental attitude include a generally cheerful outlook toward rehearsals and performances, cooperation in the preparation and maintenance of facilities, and an eagerness to do what is necessary in order to be successful. **All band members must show a respectful attitude, at all times, to the Director, Staff and Boosters.**

In short, the total band member is someone who is always willing to give his/her best for the good of the organization.

***Bus Rules & Trip Procedures***

**Safety is the most important rule** when using School Bused, School Equipment, Vans or Trailers, etc.

1. When we are preparing to load buses, always stand back and clear until the bus comes to a complete stop. This is for your safety.
2. Do not change buses. You must ride the bus to which you are assigned.
3. On school buses, try to keep the noise to a minimum. NO loud screaming, radios, etc.
4. Do not play your instrument on the bus.
5. Do not throw anything out of the windows. Keep arms, head, etc., inside the windows.
6. Answer roll call for you yourself only. Keep the noise level down. Roll will be called chaperones each time we load the bus.
7. Couples—Remember that is a Band function—NOT A DATE!!! Adhere to school rules for couples.
8. Put trash in garbage bags. Clean up your seat area before you exit the bus. “Play the game!”
9. When we return, be sure to close windows. This will help the drivers.
10. At away games and contests, you must return with the Band, unless YOUR PARENTS pick you up in person. Your Parents must sign you out with one of the Band Directors or their designee at the Bus loading area. You must then take the sign out sheet to the roll taker on your assigned bus.
11. Home games are over at roughly 9:45pm. Parents are reminded that the students are available for pickup once all equipment is unloaded at the band room.
12. Remember, NO SMOKING!
13. Be courteous, do what the chaperones ask and thank the drivers and chaperones when we return.
14. Do not use the emergency door unless an emergency arises. They are not to be used for loading and unloading the bus.
15. Do not bring valuables unless you are sure you can secure them.
16. Do not take large portable stereo radios on any trip. If you want to listen to music, you must use headphones. There are many reasons for this – courtesy for others being the main one.
17. YOU MUST put your instrument and equipment back in the Band Room when we return home. The Pit Managers will unload the truck and place the equipment close by. If you ride home with your parents, make sure you have someone take care of your equipment. **Instruments are NOT to be left out. They are to be put in their cases and then placed back in the proper storage area!**
18. When on any type of trip, students are reminded not to go anywhere by yourself. Always travel in pairs or larger groups. Please be safe!

***Individual Opportunities & Private Lessons***

Individual and small ensembles are one of the greatest educational opportunities available in any good band program. Many of these provide for a challenge as well as an evaluation of your playing.

In order for our full band to reach high achievement, every member must seek to improve individually. This aspect develops self-esteem, which is a valuable by-product in any educational offering. That is why individual practice is so important. Parental encouragement is of great importance. Students are expected to seek growth and improvement on their instrument, which can only be obtained through practice. The more….the better!

The band members at Marshall County High School are encouraged to participate in Private Lessons on their respective instruments. Private instruction provides valuable one-on-one time that isn’t always available during rehearsal time. Studying with a professional provides valuable feedback and musical insight. If you are interested in taking private lessons, please see the Director and information can be provided.

All Mid-State Band, All Mid-State Orchestra, All-State Band, All-State Orchestra, Jazz Band, Percussion Ensembles, Woodwind Ensembles, Solo & Ensemble Festival, and other honor band activities provide students with the opportunity to excel individually on their instruments and to receive recognition for their musical achievements.

***Uniform Information***

Pride in the Marshall County High School Band is a must if we are to reach our educational objectives. How we wear our uniform is reflected in the pride of our band.

Band members are expected to have their uniform in tip-top shape **every time** it is worn. This includes clean pants, gloves, shoes, and socks. We have inspection of uniforms every time that we perform, and this area is reflected in every student’s grade.

Pants should have a neat, crisp crease and be the proper length. [Down to the top of the toes with no break of the crease in front of the pants.] The hemline should skim the shoe in the front and extend to the top of the heel in the back. Do not cut the cuff or any part of the uniform. Only hem to fit.

Students are required to wear black socks with the uniform at all times. Long hair must be inside the hat and no earrings or other visible jewelry may be worn at performances.

Students should wear undergarments that fit well under the uniform. Do not attempt to wear jeans under the uniform! Only sweat-pants or long underwear are acceptable if it is cold.

**WHEN IN UNIFORM** **do not unhook collars, unzip coats, and take off hats, etc., unless the entire organization is instructed to do so by the Band Director. Students are not permitted to wear baseball caps, unapproved hats, jewelry or inappropriate or distracting hair coloring, while in uniform.**

Check your uniform for cleanliness and complete parts well enough in advance so that any deficiencies may be taken care of prior to performances. Showing up for performance with any uniform or equipment deficiencies is unacceptable. [See grading section.] **Missing parts or a shabby looking uniform = NO PERFORMANCE!**

After wearing the uniform, students must hang it back properly on a heavy hanger and the garment bag zipped and stored properly. All students are issued a band uniform during the week of Band Camp.

Students will be required to purchase black band shoes and white gloves. The cost of the shoes is estimated to be $30.00 and the gloves are $3.00. Color Guard shoes are estimated to be $50.00.

All students are responsible for taking care of their own uniform for the entire year (including dry cleaning). They will be responsible if lost or damaged and must sign an agreement stating so at the time the uniform is issued.

Band Members who need to replace lost parts are required to replace them in advance of the next performance that will require uniforms. Students are required to pay for any replacement parts they lose at the time of distribution. If you are unable to pay at the time of distribution, you will need to make arrangements for prompt payment with the Band Director. Please be courteous and take care of your payment responsibilities. Taking proper care and safeguarding your uniform will help prevent the need to purchase replacement parts.

Student’s who do not take care of their uniform responsibilities will be given a reduction in grade. Refer to Grading Section of this handbook.