

The Marching Spartans Rookie (and others) Survival Guide



This information has been put together by a group of parents who spent a portion of their "rookie year" in various stages of confusion. We want to share with the new rookie parents some of the answers to the many questions that you might have.

Being a member of the West Springfield High School (WSHS) band program will bring your children an interesting, and fulfilling educational experience. They will work hard and experience many triumphs, as well as some disappointments; two things that will prepare them for the real world after high school.

We sincerely hope the information in this guide will answer some important questions about time management and commitment, volunteering, uniforms, competitions football games and the preseason rehearsals.

TIME MANAGEMENT/ COMMITMENT

How will our children have the time to go to rehearsals after school, perform Friday nights at football games until 10pm, and compete on Saturdays four to five weekends; all within a 3-month period, and keep up their grades?

Time management will be one of the most important tools that your children will acquire when they become members of the WSHS band program. Your student will learn how to keep a schedule, how to be punctual, and how to set priorities. They must learn to use their time wisely.

A detailed monthly band calendar is posted on our website: www.WSHSspartanband.org

The calendar lists rehearsals, football games, and competitions your student will be required to attend during the marching band season. The schedule does sometimes change due to unforeseen circumstances, so checking the calendar every few days is recommended.

Published rehearsal times are the times that the band will be actively involved in rehearsing the band. That means for a 6pm rehearsal a student needs to be at the band room early enough to:

- take care of their set-up responsibilities and
- get their instruments, equipment, and themselves to the rehearsal location by 6pm, in place and ready to go.

That usually means 15-20 minutes prior to the scheduled beginning of a rehearsal. The WSHS rehearsal locations vary from day-to-day.

Rehearsals will be finished at the published time and students dismissed. However, those students crew duties might have to stay after dismissal in order to finish those duties. You will need to check with your child to see what their crew requires.

SUMMER BAND CAMP

Pre-season summer marching band rehearsals are required for marching band participation. Please arrange family vacations, doctor's visits, jobs and family time at some other time during these rehearsals. Marching band is the ultimate group activity, and if one member is missing, it has an effect on the entire group. That being said, please let the Band Director know if your child can't attend a portion of the pre-season rehearsals.

Pre-season rehearsals usually begin in the middle of August and last for three weeks. Please review the calendar at www.WSHSspartanband.org for times, dates and locations. Due to construction at West Springfield HS, pre-season rehearsals will take place at Irving Middle School located at 8100 Old Keene Mill Rd, Springfield. But stay connected and check the calendar often for changes.

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Checklist of Things Needed at rehearsals:

- Water jug with cold water is extremely important. **The jug should be at least a quart to a gallon capacity.** It is very important to stay hydrated, there is no drinking fountain in the outdoor rehearsal areas. However, water will be available to refill water jugs during the rehearsal times. Please mark student's name on the water jug.
- Recommend wearing a t-shirt (light colored-no white) and comfortable shorts. Jeans are not allowed. They will chafe and be uncomfortable after a long practice day.
- Comfortable athletic shoes or sneakers with socks. No sandals, flip-flops or other shoes inappropriate for marching practice
- Sunglasses and hat to shade your face and keep the sun out of the eyes.
- Sunscreen
- Lip protection with SPF (i.e. Chapstick)
- Marching instrument
- Drill Book (3-ring binder with 40-50 clear page protectors) with music and drill
- Pencil and highlighter
- Bag Lunch for summer daytime rehearsals

WATER, WATER, WATER

Students must stay hydrated, they will sweat a lot during marching band. It's hot on the pavement, turf and grass, they are outside, and it is summertime. Remember that caffeine dehydrates. Did we mention...Water?

TIP: Freeze some water in a container that will fit in their water jug. The block of ice will keep it cool for most of the day. There will be water available to refill the jug.

DRILL BOOK

The Drill Book holds all of the student's warm-ups, music and drill. The student should tie a string through the corner or use a lanyard and wear it for easy access.

FOOD

Please ensure your child eats a **healthy breakfast each day** before they come to rehearsal. Their body needs fuel to perform at the level necessary for marching band. Students must bring a bag lunch for pre-season rehearsals.

SPARTAN BAND CREWS

**Student Involvement
= EQUALS =
A Successful Band**

Our band is a cohesive unit. We function as one entity. All members have different functions as musicians and performers, but also are supporting members. You may not know that just as much work has to be done behind the scenes for each successful show, football game, competition or concert.

There is a student leadership structure, beginning with the Band Managers, Drum Majors, Captains, Section leaders and Crew Chiefs which extends to every band student. They help with the logistical and administrative tasks necessary to run the marching band program. **We have found that with student involvement comes ownership, growth, pride, and responsibility.**

Our way of managing the work is through making "crews" to do specific jobs (i.e. stage crew or a librarian). These crews are entirely student run, with the exception of parent volunteers and the director depending on the job.

Time commitment for crew work

Each crew requires a different amount of time and effort. Crews are designed so that no one group of people is doing an unfair amount of work while another group isn't working at all. However, some crews are used much more than others during marching band, and may have different requirements during the school year. Students will be given a description of each crew responsibilities to help them choose a crew.

Benefits of Joining a Crew

Although you are not required to be a member of a crew, it is highly encouraged for many reasons. No matter how many people sign up for crews, the same work has to get done in order for us to be successful as a program. The more hands we, have the easier that is to accomplish. **Also, if you are aspiring to be in leadership for a following year, or to continue to progress in leadership, crews are one of the best ways to showcase your dedication and skill as a leader and member of a team.** In addition, each crew has a "chief" and "assistant chief(s)" to run operations more smoothly, these are usually chosen from someone who has been on the crew before.

Crews to Choose From

- Equipment Crew
- Field Crew
- Library Crew
- Room Crew
- Uniform Crew

For a description of each crew responsibilities visit the website www.WSHSspartanband.org

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Parent Volunteering = EQUALS = A Successful Band

PARENTS GET INVOLVED

Parent volunteers provide tasks like driving the equipment truck, fitting uniforms, chaperone duties and band booster organizational tasks. Try to get involved with one of our performance events and watch how our students handle themselves as functioning members of a team.

Getting involved in the band program through the WSHS Band Boosters will give you the opportunity to share with your child the last four years of their education, these years that go so fast and are rarely enjoyed by many parents. Your child might say they'd rather not have you around, but most parents actually learn that in reality they appreciate your involvement and will thank you in the future. WSHS is fortunate to have a great instructional band staff. The band parents are needed to support the band director, and help with the details of fundraising, transporting, feeding and watering an organization of this size. Join one of the many committees; we need your help. Your help can make a difference. Being active in the WSHS Band Boosters is a great way to meet the parents and the kids your child will be spending much of their time with for the next few months. Attend the monthly WSHS Band Booster meetings to find out where you can help. It is fun, and you meet the other parents with the same interests as yours.

STAY INFORMED

The website is the place to go to first to find out the information on band and band booster events.

www.WSHSspartanband.org

Updated July 19, 2017

UNIFORMS

Pre-Season Marching Band Rehearsal (Band Camp)

- Students wear comfortable shoes, usually sneakers (CLOSED TOE, NO FLIP-FLOPS)
- a light colored t-shirt and shorts (no white or black). Shirts and shorts must be within FCPS clothing standards. Students may want to bring an extra t-shirt in case of a sudden rain shower.
- A hat recommended
- Sunglasses recommended
- Liberal use of sunscreen.
- A jug of water is essential. Quart to 1 gallon size labeled with your students name.

Marching Band Uniform

New uniforms for 2017-2018. The marching band uniform is worn at home football games, homecoming parade, competitions and TAG Day.

The marching band uniform is issued from the uniform room (before each event)— **it never goes home with students.** Uniform consists of the following items:

- Jacket
- Bibber Pants
- Shako with white plume

Additional Uniform Pieces

these items will be kept by the students and are their responsibility:

- **Black Marching Shoes. (Dinkles)** Provided as part of the marching band fee to rookie marching students or students needing a size change. Keep clean with Mr. Clean Magic Eraser and black shoe polish.

- **Marching Band T-shirt.** One shirt will be. There is a new t-shirt design each year, based on the season's show theme. It is recommended that you purchase a second marching band t-shirt for a nominal fee (ie. Most students like to have a second to use at a Saturday competition after wearing the first at a Friday night game).
- **Blue Hooded Sweatshirt.** Provided as part of the MB fee to rookie marching students or to returning students who have a size change. Sweatshirt is worn during colder weather over the marching band t-shirts. *Both the t-shirt and the sweatshirt are used for quick identification as a band member and must be worn.*
- **Athletic shorts** or "Umbro" type shorts. Provided by each student, required for group changes in open conditions.
- **Black Socks.** Calf-length provided by each student.
- **White Gloves.** Provided as part of the marching band fee.

***TIP:** Girls with long hair will need to put their hair up in Shako hair. A small makeup pouch with extra bobby pins, brush and hair elastics is helpful. You can keep it your Dinkle box. Boys with long hair will be required to wear a hair net which you can get from the uniform crew.*

GUARD UNIFORM

Students in the Guard will not wear the marching band uniform, but a costume based on the show theme. This costume will be provided.

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Students will also receive a marching band t-shirt and a Guard Jacket. Students in the Guard may purchase a blue hooded sweatshirt. Guard students need to bring required makeup to and hair items to each event.

REMEMBER WHILE IN UNIFORM:

- Hair will be kept off of the collar of the uniform jacket. If a student can't put up their hair in an orderly manner, hairnets are available.
- No jewelry
- No nail polish except for students in the Guard, if required.
- No makeup (transfers to marching uniform) except for students in the Guard.
- Please don't use hair products that could possibly transfer to the uniform.
- Only food provided by chaperones can be eaten while in uniform. Water is OK and encouraged.

AWAY FOOTBALL GAMES

Students do not normally perform their show during away football games, but play "Pep" music. The students must wear their marching band t-shirts, blue hooded sweatshirts or Guard Jacket during colder weather, and jeans.

HELPFUL HINTS TO SAVE YOU TIME AND GRIEF:

- Make your child responsible for being prepared. The first time they forget something will help them to remember not to forget it the next time.
- At the end of each practice session there are usually announcements. This is the

best opportunity the students have to find out who, what, where, and when things are going on. Ask your student when you pick them up from rehearsal if there were any announcements today you need to know about.

- Come to the competitions and football games. The band students love it when they have their own cheering section.
- Make sure your correct emails (parent and student) are in CHARMS.

CONTACTS:

Band Office Phone Number: 703-913-3931

EMAIL: Band Director (Eric Hoang) emhoang@fcps.edu

Website:

www.WSHSspartanband.org

TERMS AND PHRASES YOU MIGHT HEAR

"If you are early, you're on time; if you're on time, you're late"

Students need to have time to get their instrument and get to the practice location by the published time of the practice. Plan for 15-20 minutes before published time.

"Where's my Dot?" or "Do we line up on the hash?"

This does not refer to insects or food. These terms indicate how the practice field is marked off. Students use their Drill Books to understand their position on the field.

"Just sit where band parents sit."

The area outside the uniform room is where the chaperones and "Pit" parents meet. When the band leaves for the stadium, band parents normally sit just right of the band (facing the field), which is in the area of the 30-yard line.

"Are you working the Pit?"

The "Pit" is a group of percussion instruments that travel on a trailer and are stationary during performances. It is also known as the Front Ensemble. The students need parents to help move this equipment.

YOU KNOW YOU ARE A BAND PARENT WHEN...

- You make three extra trips from home to the band room to drop off everything forgotten, but needed.
- You carry extra black socks, reeds, hair supplies and other things.
- Your weekends revolve around the Band schedule, at least until November.
- You can't pick your child out of the crowd when they are in uniform because they all look alike at a distance.
- You no longer speak of your child as a fourteen-year old daughter/son, but as a "freshman trumpet, freshman flute," etc.
- You know you will be wearing something blue/orange every Friday night and on competition Saturdays.
- You are cheering with other band parents. (Bring a cowbell to ring!)