

Wake Forest High School

MARCHING COUGARS

Student/Parent Handbook

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Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the Marching Cougars! I believe students should gain a greater knowledge and deeper understanding of music through their band experience. Marching band provides a great way for students, family, and the community to experience music. From football games to competitions, our goal is to always perform with the highest level of excellence.

All members of the Marching Cougars (except colorguard) must register for a band class. Please discuss your schedule with me if you have a class conflict.

Please read this handbook and keep it for your reference throughout the season.

Thank you,

Brandon Martel
Band Director
Wake Forest High School

Communication:

- Cut Time – Online band management system.
 - Text Messages – All parents and students must receive and read these messages. All official announcements will be made via email.
 - Financial Statements – check Fairshare and fundraising
- Canvas – Students are required to join the marching band Canvas. Music, drill, judges commentary, and performance videos will be posted on Canvas.
- Booster meetings held monthly. Booster meetings are required for all parents.
- Band Website – wfhsbands.com.
- Social Media – Find us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube!
- All students should be in communication with their section leader via text.
- Mr. Martel's email: bmartel@wcpss.net.

Calendar:

The full calendar can be found at wfhsbands.com. Here are the highlights:

Summer Rehearsals

July 15, 17, 22, 24

August 12, 14, 19, 21

All days are 5-8pm

Band Camp

July 28-August 1 and August 4-8

Regular Rehearsals

Once the school year begins, full band rehearsals will be every Tuesday and Thursday from 5-8pm. Sectionals will be Wednesdays after school from 2:30-4:00. Sectionals will be called as needed.

Fall Camp Saturdays

September 6th and 13th from 8am-5pm

Football Games - Fridays, 6pm call time, 7pm kickoff

August 22

September 5

October 3 (Middle School Night)

October 17 (Homecoming)

October 31 (Senior Night)

Competitions - ALL DAY

September 27 - Cleveland

October 4 - Middle Creek

October 11 - Rolesville

October 25 - Sanderson

November 1 - Cary Band Day

Post-Season

Regular rehearsals will end after Cary Band Day.

We will perform as a pep band for post-season football games.

Rolesville Christmas Parade - December 7

Band Camp Info:

Daily Schedule:

8:00am – Full Band Meeting

8:30am – Outdoor Visual Rehearsal (percussion/colorguard sectionals)

12:00pm – Lunch

12:30pm – Activity

1:00pm – Sectionals

3:00pm – Afternoon Meeting/Video

3:15pm – Full Band Music Rehearsal (colorguard sectionals)

5:00pm – Dismissal

Required Items:

- Lunch
- Snacks
- Refillable water bottle/cooler
- Instrument/Equipment
- Appropriate clothes (the WCPSS Dress Code is in effect)
- Athletic shoes, socks
- Hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, bugspray
- Musicians Only – 1/2” Binder with sheet protectors, pencil

Other Band Camp Info:

- Band Camp is a highly athletic experience. Get exercise and get outdoors in the weeks leading up to camp.
- Eat a nutritious breakfast and pre-hydrate on camp days.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Avoid caffeine; it adversely affects hydration, energy levels, and sleep quality.
- Drink water at every break.
- Wear a hat and sunscreen to avoid burns.
- Speak with an adult if you are not feeling well.

MEMBER EXPECTATIONS

Attendance Policy:

- Every individual contributes to the overall success of the band.
- Attendance drives Excellence – In order to learn music, drill formations, and choreography, all members must be present.
- Attendance is mandatory at all rehearsals and events.
- REHEARSAL ATTENDANCE
 - Please avoid scheduling appointments on marching band rehearsal days.
 - Excused absences are allowed in the event of illness or other unavoidable conflicts. Mr. Martel must receive an email from a parent/guardian *before* the absence or it will count as unexcused.
 - Unexcused absences will result in a student/parent conference.
 - Excessive absences may result in dismissal from the band.
- PERFORMANCE ATTENDANCE
 - Absences from performances are not permitted, except for extreme circumstances.
 - Do NOT schedule other activities on performance days (football and competitions). Schedules for competitions are often not published until the week before. Mr. Martel has no control over our assigned performance time.
 - Students are expected to attend the entire performance. Students are not permitted to leave early from football games or competitions.
- Tardiness – Listed times are when events begin and end. Students must be in place at the assigned time in order to begin rehearsal. If rehearsal begins at 5, you are *participating* at 5, not still walking from the band room. Conversely, rehearsals will end at the listed time. Parents, please allow a few minutes at the end of rehearsal for students to walk back to the band room and pack their instruments.
- Communicate with Mr. Martel and your section leader regarding all absences.

Academic Statement:

It is expected that all members are responsible for completing their academic course work independently from their commitment to the Marching Cougars. By committing to an extracurricular activity, you are agreeing that you will manage your time appropriately in order to honor all commitments.

Under no circumstances should rehearsal or performance be used as an excuse for failure to complete assigned coursework. Conversely, at no point should school work be used as an excuse to miss scheduled events with the Marching Cougars.

It is well within each member's abilities to handle the responsibilities of their academic courses as well as their commitment to the Marching Cougars. Time management is an important skill, and one that each student will find invaluable in their college and professional careers.

General Expectations:

Professionalism: *Members act with a level of professionalism consistent with the WFHS Band standard, both in and out of performance.*

- No "PDA" (public display of affection).
- No goofing off, horseplay, or general nonsense. Keep your hands to yourself.
- No profane or inappropriate language.
- All equipment should be handled with care and respect. Store and organize equipment in a professional manner.
 - Equipment and Instruments are stacked or lined up neatly in rows and unified as directed by student leaders.
 - Only you are to touch your own instrument. Never leave your instrument unattended (especially on the ground or on the bleachers).
 - Musicians never play their instruments in public unless it is organized ("We all play or we don't play.").
- We clean up after ourselves. We leave a place better than how we found it, both on and off campus (practice field, gym, buses, cafeteria, etc.).
- We use our inside voices, especially when we are guests at other schools.
- We are respectful and supportive of performers from other schools. Students remain seated and quiet while watching other groups (no getting up or moving around during a performance). *Every group is deserving of a standing ovation and our applause.* As audience members, it is generally considered rude to have conversations or use electronic devices or have headphones in during a performance.
- We always look presentable and wear appropriate attire (show shirts or WFHS approved SpiritWear).

Respect.

- *Chaperones:* The instructions they give are an extension of the director. Use "sir" and "ma'am" and show appreciation to them for giving their time and energy for you. Do not let them move equipment and props if you are not doing anything. This is *your* ensemble, not theirs.

- *Staff:* Their expertise is crucial to our success. Listen and apply their feedback. Respect their decisions, even if you don't understand or agree at the time. Never take instructional corrections personally.
- *Student Leaders:* The hierarchy of student leadership is also vital to our success and the normal operations of our program. If you feel that someone is out of line, do not take matters into your own hands; follow the chain of command (section leaders, captains, drum majors).
- *Other members:* Any team activity requires support among its members. Be kind to one another. Encourage your fellow team members to do their best for their own sake and for the success of the group. Compliment their improvements and keep them motivated when they seem to feel they can't go any farther. Bullying in any form will not be tolerated in the Wake Forest Band program.
- *The program and school:* You are an advocate and representative for the director, the program, the school, our town, and sometimes even our state. This tremendous responsibility should not be taken lightly.
- *Other schools:* We will demonstrate good sportsmanship by supporting other schools and groups, encouraging them, and celebrating their successes. Any critical or negative comments about another group can be misinterpreted or taken out of context and should be avoided.
- *Yourself:* Behaving in a professional way means you take yourself and your organization seriously. Taking yourself seriously allows for mutual respect with others.

Social Media.

- Any posts about the WFHS Band or that can be connected in any way to the WFHS Band will represent the program positively and professionally. Negative comments about other programs or any other statements that do not represent our program's philosophy are not acceptable.
- No video clips of the performance should be posted online without the permission of the director.
- No pictures of the uniforms/costumes or props should be posted online before the first competition performance.

Nutrition and Health. Members take care of themselves by practicing proper nutrition.

- Drink plenty of water throughout the season. Stretch before and after rehearsal. Do not skip meals before rehearsals. Bring a water bottle to EVERY rehearsal and

competition. Avoid sodas, fruit juices, and dairy products before rehearsals (especially camp days) and performances.

- Do not share water bottles. This helps prevent the spread of colds and viruses.
- Should a student acquire an injury or illness within the season we will do our best to accommodate them within the show. If it is a long-term injury we may have to pull them out of certain parts of the show. We will do our best to work around these types of situations but there is the risk that you may not end up in the entire show.

Rehearsal Expectations:

- *Members PRACTICE individually at home. We REHEARSE together.* Do your part to contribute to the group by working outside of rehearsal on the things that you need to in order to perform them at or above standard.
- *Members come to rehearsal prepared and with proper attire.* Rehearsal attire consists of comfortable and athletic clothing (no excessively baggy clothing and NO JEANS) and athletic sneakers with socks. Because our practice areas are normally very visible, following the school dress code is also important.
- *Members are prepared to begin rehearsing at the designated start time of each rehearsal.* Members are present and participating in organized warm-up activities at the moment they begin. Plan to get to rehearsal in time to begin any necessary stretching and set up before rehearsal starts. "To be early is to be on time. To be on time is to be late."
- *Members do what they need to do to be mentally prepared for rehearsal as well as physically prepared.* This means there is no goofing off or horseplaying right before rehearsal begins.
- *Members are prepared for rehearsal with all items necessary for an efficient rehearsal,* i.e. personal equipment, dotbook, instrument with all necessary supplies, sticks/mallets, music (in a binder with sheet protectors), pencil, etc. Failure to do such will result in limited participation in rehearsals.
- *Members stay quiet and alert during rehearsal.* When any person of authority is talking, all other talking should cease. Do not talk unless otherwise instructed to help someone around you or an instructor is talking to you.
- *Members respect the rehearsal protocol/process.* There is no talking or moving at the position of attention and there is no talking during a rep. The position of attention is a position of focus and discipline. Likewise, any time you are marching or in a rep, you uphold a level of discipline. Always use proper marching technique and strive to look and sound your best.
- *Members are expected to be working at all times during rehearsal whether it be self-directed or with an instructor.* The only exception will be designated breaks.

- *ALL members are responsible for putting equipment away at the end of each rehearsal.* Rehearsals END at the time listed in the calendar. This does not necessarily mean that students will be able to leave directly at that time. NO student should ever leave a rehearsal without checking out with their section leader or committee chair as appropriate. If every member helps with clean-up, then EVERY member gets to leave earlier.
- *Members make arrangements to make-up anything that was missed due to an absence.* This will be done prior to the next rehearsal.
- *There is to be NO food in any rehearsal area outside of scheduled breaks.*
- *Members may use electronic devices solely for the purpose of looking up drill and music.* Other uses of devices are a distraction and will take away from the quality of the rehearsal.
- *Members leave their personal lives outside of rehearsal.* If you had a bad day, do not take it out on your fellow group members.

In the Football Stands:

- Stay in your assigned section.
- Do not leave the stands except for emergencies.
- Be focused and ready to play at all times.
- Be engaged with the game. Stand up, cheer, and show good sportsmanship. Only sit down if there is an injury on the field.
- No guests are allowed in the band section.
- No electronic devices will be used during the game. You may keep them in your pocket.
- Students will have a break after halftime. Be back in the stands ready to play at 2:00 in the 3rd quarter.

At Competitions:

- Sit together in the stands after our performance.
- Show respect and be engaged with other bands.
- Remember that everyone puts a lot of time and effort into their performances.
- Cheer appropriately and demonstrate professionalism at the awards ceremony.

On the Bus:

- Keep your hands to yourself.
- Keep the noise to a minimum. Use inside voices and headphones so as to not distract the driver or bother those around you.
- No drumsticks are allowed on the bus.
- Stay in your seat and face forward. Do not sit in the aisle.

Uniform Expectations:

- The uniform is how we show our unity as a band; it should be worn with pride.
- Students should display the highest level of respect when wearing the uniform.
- You are representing the community, school, and the Marching Cougars when you are in uniform. Most importantly, you are representing yourself.
- The uniform should be worn the same way as all other members. For example, if the drum major signals to remove jackets, all members must completely remove their jackets.
- Items that are lost or damaged will be the financial responsibility of the student.
- Long hair is worn in a bun or ponytail under the hat.
- No jewelry except small studs.
- Sunglasses are allowed except during pregame and halftime performances. No other hats are allowed.
- Electronic devices are not allowed in uniform before or during a performance. This includes the entire time we are in the stands at a football game.

Full Uniform:

- Jackets should be folded inside-out before being placed on the ground.
- Hats should never touch the ground.
- Pants should be high enough so the front pleat is straight.
- Students must wear tall black socks.
- The Band T-Shirt is worn under the jacket.
- Athletic shorts are recommended.
- Students will need to purchase and maintain their own shoes (fitted at Band Camp and ordered through the boosters). Excessively worn or damaged shoes must be replaced.

Summer Uniform:

- Band T-shirt, khaki shorts, brown belt, athletic shoes, socks.
- The t-shirt will be tucked in.
- Shorts will be the appropriate length according to the WCPSS Dress Code.

Travel Policy:

- Members are required to travel with the band to and from the competition. Only Marching Cougars and chaperones will be allowed to ride the bus.
- Travel Deviation Forms:
 - In the event that a student needs to leave early from a competition, a parent/guardian must fill out a Travel Deviation Form.
 - Forms are due one day before the trip.

- Travel deviation should only be used for unavoidable conflicts.
- The student is required to find another student to complete unloading and clean-up responsibilities on his/her behalf.

HOW TO SUCCEED IN THE MARCHING COUGARS

Always do what is best for the group, not necessarily what is best for just you. We are a team and we must work together.

Have full faith in yourself and your capabilities. Everyone will be learning new things and facing new challenges. Do not doubt yourself for one moment. People are going to learn at different rates; try your best not to compare yourself to others. Even if you are picking up on something quickly or know the task that is being asked of you, allow yourself to take it to the next step. (Consistency, performance, technique). Don't let someone else have more faith in you than you have in yourself.

Commit to giving 100%, 100% of the time. Expect to work hard. There is no first-string and second-string, and when one person gets tired we cannot send another player in as a substitute. Everyone is performing all of the time. *We are only as strong as our weakest member.*

Take responsibility for your actions and learn from your mistakes. *Apologize when you know you are wrong and mean it.*

Rehearse as you want to perform. We are working toward consistency. *Anything that happens in rehearsal will likely happen in performance.*

Make efficient use of our rehearsal time. Take notes in the music of changes, things to practice, and suggested improvements during rehearsal. Listen even when the director may not be talking directly to your section, as it may apply to you later in the music.

Take every opportunity to watch other groups perform. They are doing the same thing that you are and you will learn a lot from watching them (both good and bad). While at a competition at another school, spend as much time watching as possible. Use scheduled breaks to take care of restroom and concession needs.

Winning isn't everything. Competition certainly motivates us, but your primary motivation should be the desire to improve. As long as we get better with each performance, we stay in competition with ourselves. Intrinsic motivation is much more powerful and rewarding than the extrinsic motivation to win a trophy. The performance of others should never determine

the quality of your own performance. During awards ceremonies, be proud of our group and our school no matter what the results and if you agree or disagree. *You should not cheer any louder for winning first place than for placing last.*

Do not expect exceptions to be made on your behalf. Making an exception for one would lead to others expecting the same exception.

Stay positive and offer and accept help! Students at all ability levels are going to have some form of critique offered to him or her to motivate constant improvement. If you are experienced at a task, please offer assistance when the instructor has asked for you to do so. We are going to get better by helping each other.

Practice! If you are struggling with a task, don't be upset. Keep working on it. Growth and improvement speak volumes over those who are naturally gifted but don't push themselves to the next level! Never get satisfied with yourself; be the best you can be. Constantly work to improve your performance ability.

HOW TO BE A WFHS BAND PARENT

Along with the experience of being a band member, parents can become part of the experience too! Here are some ways that you can become part of your son/daughter's rewarding experience as a band parent.

Communication

Communication is the key to the operation of a large organization. A regular Band Broadcast email will go out with important information, including times, dates, and changes. Please be sure to read all broadcasts. Also, be sure to stay in communication with the band director and/or band chaperones about any extenuating circumstances, conflicts, or requests. While we do support teaching our students how to be independent and self-sufficient, they still need some guidance from the adults on how to develop important skills.

Closed Rehearsals

We have a "closed rehearsal" policy. This means that only designated band chaperones will be allowed to watch rehearsals (with the exception of the last few minutes for the final run-through of the day on a full band rehearsal day). This is both for the students' safety as well as for the students to be able to perform to their highest potential without distractions.

It is the instructors' job to make instructional decisions and corrections. Please never attempt to correct or instruct a student on music, choreography, drill, movement, technique, etc. Please never step onto the field during a rehearsal (including during breaks).

Volunteering

Our program can't run without the help of many volunteers. Please make every attempt to donate *time*, *items*, *services*, or all of the above.

- *Time*: We need chaperones (reference *Chaperone Guidelines*) for practices, football games, and competitions. We will need drivers for students on occasion, particularly in the winter. We will need parents to help load and transport props and equipment.
- *Items*: We need many food and drink items (teenagers like to eat!).
- *Service*: Examples of service opportunities are uniform/costume maintenance, prop building/maintenance/transportation, pulling the trailer, etc.

Fundraising

To operate our organization costs a lot of money, and for the most part we are self-sustaining and raise the money ourselves. We have student-account fundraisers which directly subsidize your own personal band-related expenses, and we have general band fundraisers. While some families may choose to pay out of pocket rather than participating in the student account fundraisers, it is requested that every band family participate in the general band fundraisers. These fundraisers help the entire band program operate. Expenses include new instrument purchase, instrument maintenance, classroom supplies, sheet music, guest artists and clinicians, financial aid, clerical expenses, etc.

Support

In addition to volunteering, there are many other things you can do to support your band student as they learn many important life lessons through participation in the band. Understand how the band operates and the importance of your child's role within the band and support them as such.

- *Time management*: One of the most important things that marching band teaches young men and women is time management. Have conversations with them often about how to balance academics and extracurricular activities so they can be successful and fully committed to both. Remind them about the dangers of procrastination. If academics suffer because of marching band, the student's transcript can see

long-lasting effects. If a student's marching band commitment suffers because his/her schoolwork starts suffering, we are all affected.

- *Schedule*: Please help your student fulfill his/her commitment to marching band by planning your family's schedule around rehearsals and performances as much as possible. This includes doctor's appointments, family vacations, etc.
- *Nutrition*: Be sure your son/daughter is taking care of his/her body, particularly during marching band camp. Greasy or salty foods should be avoided, as should soda. Hydrate often.
- *Sleep*: Encourage your marching band student to get plenty of rest so their body can keep up with the demand that marching band places on it.
- *Discipline*: Perhaps the most important thing that marching band teaches is discipline. We strive to maintain a professional and disciplined appearance, both on and off the field. When with the band, students lose their individuality and become a team. All decisions they make should be guided by this principle.
- *Audience*: Be a supportive audience member and come to as many performances as you can! Wear WFHS Spirit Wear so our presence is known.
 - No WFHS parent or student should ever make negative or judgmental comments about another school or group or their performance. You never know who is within earshot, and such comments reflect negatively on our entire organization. It is certainly appropriate to applaud and cheer in a performance when you see or hear something you like. In fact, the band performs better when they have a receptive and supportive audience. **Many times, the effect on the audience and the judges can be enhanced by the crowd's response.**

Social Media

Any posts about the WFHS Band or that can be connected in any way to the WFHS Band will represent the program positively and professionally. Negative comments about other programs or any other statements that do not represent our program's philosophy are not acceptable.

No video clips of the performance should be posted online without the permission of the director. No pictures of the uniforms/costumes or props should be posted online before the first competition performance.

VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

- All volunteers must be registered with WCPSS before being allowed to assist as a chaperone. This can be done at the office of any Wake County Public School.

- Student safety is the primary focus.
- Chaperones are there to ensure student safety and to assist students who are sick or injured. Chaperones are not to participate in any portion of the rehearsal with the students (ex. stretches, warm-ups, etc.). Chaperones should not enter the rehearsal space (practice field, gym floor, etc.) unless it is an emergency. This is for the safety of the students as well as the chaperone.
- Chaperones are not to distribute any medication of any kind to a student, including OTC or prescription medications. Chaperones are not allowed to be made aware of any medical conditions or needs or hold medication for a student. In emergency situations, chaperones are first to call 911 then alert the band director or other WCPSS employee immediately.
- Volunteers generally load and unload the equipment trailers. They may request student volunteers to help. Volunteers must monitor students for safety when handling equipment.
- Basic First aid kits must be carried with chaperones at all times. If an injury/illness occurs please handle the injury/illness per WCPSS guidelines and do not be afraid to ask for assistance.
- The director sets the itinerary. Chaperones are present to ensure students are where they need to be on time and safely. Please be flexible when changes are made.
- The director sets student behavior. If students are not complying with your direction please take immediate action to solve the problem and if necessary contact the band director for assistance. If school rules have been violated please contact the band director immediately.
- Always treat students, staff, and other chaperones with respect.
- The purchase and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages and tobacco use is prohibited during chaperoned events. This includes overnight trips where no alcohol or tobacco is allowed in the chaperone's luggage or hotel rooms as well. Smoking in your car during any chaperoned event and consuming alcohol prior to the event are not allowed per WCPSS policy.
- Chaperones walk/ride with the band when traveling from one location to another. Students should be quiet and professional when in formation and chatting with them is discouraged unless direction is needed.
- Hydration/nutrition is crucial to the safety and function of the students. Chaperones will provide water/snacks at designated times.
- Once the students have begun rotation (getting dressed, section meetings, warm-up, etc.), there should be no further communication with them from chaperones unless it is an emergency. This includes interacting with them, gathering them for pictures, etc. This is the time for the staff to get them focused and ready to perform their best.

- As a chaperone, you are a chaperone for all students, not just your son/daughter. In marching band, it is likely that parents will not be placed with the section to which their son/daughter belongs. In addition, chaperones should not allow any “special privileges” for his/her son/daughter or other students. Examples include purchasing food when it isn’t allowed for the entire group, separating them from the rest of the group, etc.
- Have a positive and flexible attitude at all times! This is an important part of the high school experience for these students. The job of the chaperones is to help enhance this by keeping the students safe at all times.

FairShare/Fundraising:

- The FairShare for this marching season is \$700
 - \$100 deposit is due June 1st.
 - \$200 payment due July 28th (1st day of band camp).
 - \$200 payment due September 1st.
 - \$200 payment due October 1st.
- Students with unpaid FairShare fees will not be allowed to join another band activity. For example, if you owe from winterguard, you can not sign up for marching band.
- Seniors with Fairshare balances due will be reported to WFHS. The school administration requires all fees to be paid before graduation.
- Fundraising opportunities will be available. Many fundraisers will be applied directly to student accounts, lowering the amount one has to pay out of pocket. Visit the band website for more information on fundraising.
- Spirit Wear:
 - Students will purchase their own marching shoes and band shirt. These items can be worn from year-to-year. Students will be fitted for shoes during band camp.
 - Color guard members will be asked to purchase various items.
 - Additional Spirit Wear items are available for purchase.
 - All Spirit Wear orders must be PAID IN FULL when the order is placed.

Refund Policy

Refund of any money spent out of pocket will be made only if the situation for leaving the Band falls into one of the following four categories:

1. Student has been reassigned to a non-magnet high school over the summer and will not participate in the WFHS Band.

2. A family emergency prevents completing the obligation to the organization (a prorated portion will be refunded).

3. The family is relocating to another city and cannot complete their membership in this organization (prorated).

4. A written physician note stating the student should not participate in physical activity, including band (prorated).

Refunds will not be issued for any other reason. Once you pass a payment date, that is the amount owed. For example, if a student drops out on August 2nd, they will owe \$350.