



**The West Orange High School  
Marching Mountaineers Rookie Handbook**

**Info, Tips & Inspiration for Students & Parents**  
*What we wish we had known but did not know to ask!*

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# Welcome to the West Orange High School Marching Mountaineers

Welcome and congratulations! Joining the marching band can be a life changing experience for you and your child. The amount of time and hard work you put in will seem enormous at some points. I promise you that the experiences you and your child will experience will more than make up for the sweat and tears! If you have any questions about the program, please do not hesitate to reach out via email or phone.

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## Time Commitment/Time Management

### Time Commitment

All camps, rehearsals, and performances are mandatory. If your child is absent or unable to play/march/perform their part, it will have a negative impact on the efforts of ALL the other students.

During the fall, your child will typically have 1-2 days when they do not have marching band practice each week. **Arrange doctor's visits, family trips, etc., on days that your child does not have rehearsals or performances.**

Conflicts must be communicated via email to the Directors in advance. (see below under "Absences")

### Time Management

**"Early is On Time, On Time is Late, and Late is Inexcusable."**

If Band Camp starts at 9:00 AM, that does not mean arrive at 9:00 AM. It means your child should arrive early and be on the field READY TO REHEARSE at 9:00 AM!

Time management may be the most important skill your child acquires as a member of the Marching Mountaineers. Students learn how to keep a schedule and set priorities. Be patient, it may take a few weeks for "rookies" to get the hang of it (but they will).

### Absences

In the event that your student cannot attend rehearsal due to illness or emergency, the following communications are expected:

- Parents will email Mr. Kelly or Mrs. Lagatic to report the absence
- Students will email their section leader to report the absence

**Both** forms of communication are required for **all absences**.

## Communication/Band Lingo

### Communications

Please familiarize yourself with these modes and means of communications. It's important to stay-up-to-date at all times.

**Marching Band Google Classroom:** *(for students)* Important messages and schedule updates are posted in the Google Classroom. Please check regularly and often.

**Email (aka Band Blasts):** *(for parents)* Emails are sent weekly to the registered parent/guardian of the marching band student. This email includes important information including schedules, volunteer and donation needs and upcoming events. Parents/guardians can stay most up-to-date with emails. (Please check your spam if you don't see them, or sign up with an additional/alternate email at [www.wohsmusic.org](http://www.wohsmusic.org))

**Remind:** *(for students and parents)* For timely announcements such as weather-related updates, return to school times, and other similar announcements, the band directors use Remind. Please sign up using the following codes:

All Marching Band: @wohsmb  
 Color Guard: @wocg  
 Pit Crew Parents: @wohsmbcrew

**Ask Your Child:** Announcements are often made at the end of practices, games and competitions.

**Social Media:** Follow the band on social media to keep up with the latest happenings!

- o Instagram: @wohsbands, @westorangehscolorguard
- o YouTube: WOHS Bands
- o Facebook: WOHS Band Parents (private group)

### Band Lingo - Learn it!

<b>Adjudicators:</b> the judges at competitions	<b>Rain/Indoor Show:</b> the Band Directors will announce if a Rain/Indoor show is planned
<b>Color Guard:</b> The "visual" performers in the marching band, including dancers, flag spinners/throwers, sabre & rifle spinners/throwers	<b>Pit/Front Ensemble:</b> the non-marching percussion positioned on the front sideline
<b>Dots/Dot cards:</b> a performer's position coordinates during certain points of the field show and the card provided to indicate position	<b>Plume:</b> a feather adornment for Shako
<b>Drumline:</b> the percussionists who march on the field	<b>Section Leader:</b> the student leaders of specific sections of the marching band

<b>Drum Major:</b> the student conductors/leaders of the marching band	<b>Shako:</b> a hat worn during competition
<b>Full Ensemble:</b> All members of the band, including Winds, Percussion, Front Ensemble and Color Guard	<b>Show Shirt</b> the season's shirt celebrating the show theme. Students will be required to wear this shirt under their uniform or to certain events per the direction of the Band Directors. Replacements or extras are available for purchase.
<b>Invitational/Home Show:</b> The Marching Mountaineers host a marching band competition in October that we call the Invitational or Home Show.	<b>Sousaphone:</b> the type of tuba used for marching
<b>Logo Shirt:</b> students will be required to wear this shirt under their uniform per the direction of the Band Directors. The logo shirt is included in the first year registration fee. Replacements or extras are available for purchase.	<b>Pit Crew:</b> the parent volunteers who help load/unload the band trailer and move percussion/front ensemble instruments and props onto the performance field for performances at home football games and competitions
<b>Pep Band:</b> a subset of the wind and percussion section (no color guard) that attends away football games. Students are assigned specific games they are required to attend throughout the season. For playoff games, all wind and percussion students are required to attend.	

## What to Expect At Band Events & Rehearsals

### Summer Rehearsals (Typically July – early August, once a week)

Students are expected to attend these rehearsals if they are in the band. Students are excused if they are out of town for camp/vacation (The band directors and student section leaders must be notified in advance of all absences.)

### Band Camp and Mini Camps (Starting August through September)

Band Camp attendance is required for all participating marching band members. Band members will work in their sections and with the whole band to learn music, marching fundamentals and their drill. Band Camp is typically Monday through Friday, with lunch and dinner provided by the Music Boosters. Outdoor attire, sun protection and water are must-haves for the week. The Mini Camps are similar to Band Camp, but shorter in days/time.

### Rehearsals (September – October)

Attendance at all rehearsals during the marching band season is mandatory and required for all marching band members. Typical rehearsal days are T/Thu/Sat (Color Guard), W/Thu/Sat (Winds & Percussion); For home games, there will be a short rehearsal after school before the game. For away games, there may or may not be a short rehearsal for wind & percussion only.

Students should bring a change of clothes, snacks, and water on rehearsal days

PARENT TIP: Rehearsal end time is when the band will stop rehearsal. They will then clean up, put their instruments and equipment away. Please plan on an extra 15-20 minutes after rehearsal end time before they are ready to leave.

### Football Games

A typical Friday Home football game schedule includes:
<b>After School:</b> The Marching Band will rehearse after school, until the dinner break dismissal. Students are “on their own” for dinner unless noted otherwise. They are responsible for returning at the indicated time to get dressed and to line up outside the band room before marching into Suriano Stadium.
<b>First Half of Game:</b> The winds and percussion students perform in the stands. The color guard will use this time to warm-up and prepare for halftime. Parents and friends are not permitted to sit with the band but are welcome to sit nearby.
<b>Half-Time:</b> The band performs their show on the field.
<b>Third Quarter:</b> Students take a break from performance. The Music Boosters usually provide water and a snack after the half-time performance but the students are welcome to purchase from concessions with their own funds. The color guard will return their equipment to the band room and be dismissed from their.
<b>Fourth Quarter:</b> Wind and percussion students return to playing in the stands.
<b>Game End:</b> Students return all instruments and equipment to the band room/designated area and then are dismissed.

## Away Football Games

For Away Football Games, the Marching Mountaineers “Pep Band” performs in the stands during the game. Students will be assigned specific games to attend at the start of the season. Students are able to request games that they would like to be excused from via a form filled out in August. Section leaders are expected to attend all away games. Color Guard members are not required to attend any away football games, but may have a sectional rehearsal that evening.

<b>A typical Away football game schedule includes:</b>
<b>Load Out:</b> Students are expected to arrive at the band room by this time to load the equipment bus and be seated in the student bus. Students are “on their own” for dinner and are encouraged to eat before getting on the bus.
<b>First Half of Game:</b> Perform in the stands. Parents and friends are not permitted to sit with the band but are welcome to sit nearby.
<b>Half-Time:</b> The band does not perform during half-time but will usually watch the host band in their performance.
<b>Third Quarter:</b> Students take a break from performance. Students may be allowed to purchase from concessions (if available) with their own funds.
<b>Return/Dismissal:</b> Students will return home at the end of the game. It is suggested that they communicate with parents on their ETA.

NOTE: Students are not allowed to leave from any football game or competition prior to dismissal unless approved by a band director in writing.

## Competitions

Marching band competitions are like athletic contests/meets where many different schools compete/perform. Bands are critiqued and ranked in different areas by qualified judges.

Competitions are usually on Saturdays in nearby locations. Parents/families are highly encouraged to come cheer on our band at the performance!

<b>A typical competition day schedule includes:</b>
<b>Rehearsal:</b> Students will rehearse in rehearsal clothes before getting ready for their competition. Please bring water and snacks! Students are encouraged to bring and use any hygiene items after rehearsal such as wipes and/or deodorant before they put on their uniforms/costumes.
<b>Load the Trailer:</b> After rehearsal, most students will bring their assignment equipment and/or instrument to the band trailer for load out.

**Meal:** Students will be provided a meal by the Music Boosters on all competition days.

**Uniform/Dress:** After their meal, students will get dressed in their uniform and should get their instrument/equipment organized and ready to load onto the bus.

**Travel/Warm-up:** Students will load onto buses and travel to the competition location, where they will unload and warm-up.

**Performance Time:** Performance times are usually very precise so parents/families are encouraged to arrive at least 30 mins before to allow time for parking, tickets, etc.

**Awards:** The Marching Band will typically stay for the awards ceremony before returning on the bus to WOHS.

**Return/Dismissal:** Parents will be provided an approximate return time to WOHS but students are encouraged to communicate with families. Upon return, the band trailer must be unloaded before students are dismissed.

Students must remain with the band throughout the entire competition, unless other arrangements have been approved in writing by the directors PRIOR to the competition.

Band competitions are hosted by another school's band program and take place in their football stadium. (The host band does not compete). Concessions are occasionally available. Check the weekly email to determine if students will need money to purchase food during competition days.

## What Do I Need? How to Come Prepared!

<b>What Do I Need to Bring to Practices/Camp?</b>	
Enthusiasm and a great attitude!	Your instrument/equipment and music (Woodwinds: bring extra reeds).
Water container - AN ABSOLUTE MUST. Gallon Size.	Pencils
Sunglasses and sunscreen SPF 50+	An 8 ½ x 11" black binder with plastic sleeves & a printout of the sheet music
Snacks	Dot Cards (provided by the staff)

## What Do I Need to WEAR to Practices/Camp?

Cool, comfortable clothing	<b>Rain Gear, if applicable</b>
Recommended: White (or light colored) t-shirt	Those with long hair should consider tying it up - it's much cooler that way
Athletic shorts	Try to wear clothes that dry fast - it helps keep you more comfortable
Socks and sneakers. NO SANDALS!	Don't wear jeans...they are HOT and you will regret it
Hats. All students must wear a hat EVERY DAY during camp (except guard)	<b>Rain does NOT cancel band rehearsals or performances. Students should be prepared to rehearse in inclement weather or to rehearse indoors.</b>



### Other Tips for Rehearsals, Band Camp, and Mini-Camps

Know the schedule! The other performers are depending on you to show up at rehearsals and to perform at football games and competitions.

Be ready! During the summer leading up to camp, exercise and spend time outside in the heat so that your body is prepared.

Get plenty of rest!

Food is fuel! Eat a healthy breakfast/snack before rehearsal and bring a light snack with you.

If you don't know, ask! Your Section Leader is the first person to go to with questions.

Don't worry about memorizing your music - by the time we're done, you'll get it.

Don't worry about learning to move and play at the same time - we'll teach you.

Be prepared for varying weather and bring an extra set of clothes/shoes to keep in your hallway or band locker.

Once the sun starts to set & practice is "almost over", the temps drop, do be prepared with an extra sweatshirt

Don't toss last year's sneakers! Instead, keep them as an extra pair of "practice sneakers" for rehearsals when it rains.

Uniforms will be assigned at the end of August.

Most of all... **have fun!**

Perform your best and enjoy the time we spend together...this is what it's all about!

## Marching Band Leadership Structure



### **Band Directors**

Mr. Kelly and Mrs. Lagatic, our Band Directors, are our “Head Coaches”. They oversee the daily operations of the band program, including hiring and supervising staff, overseeing the Music Boosters, and educating our children.

**Band Staff:** Extra staff hired by the Directors to create the band performance and teach/train the students. Think of them as “Assistant Coaches.”

**Drum Majors:** Students who serve as the lead conductors of the band.

**Section Leaders / Student Leadership:** Each section of the band, including Brass, Woodwinds, Drumline, Front Ensemble, & Color Guard, as well as Field and Marching, have student leaders who lead and rehearse small groups of students. Leadership within the Marching Mountaineers is a privilege bestowed upon those students whose actions and behavior have demonstrated a high standard of discipline and maturity and a dedication to the success of the band. Student leaders are expected to assist the Band Directors and Staff, as requested, and to lead by example throughout the year.

**The WOHS Music Boosters:** The Music Boosters is a registered 501c3 non-profit led by an all-volunteer parent group that supports the Marching Band students and directors, as well as other music related programs at WOHS.

## The Parent Pro Tips

### CONGRATULATIONS! YOU ARE NOW A BAND PARENT!

Here's a few ways you can be the best band parent you can be:

**Support and encourage your child!** Tell them how proud you are of what they are learning and how they are growing from being part of the band.

**Understand the Calendar and Schedule!** Understanding the band rehearsal and competition schedule is a cornerstone of your child's success. Please add the Google Calendar to your phone or family calendar for frequent access.

**Get to know each other!** Picking your kid up from practice? Get out of the car and say hi to the other parents. Relationships with other adults in the program will benefit both you and your child. *Note: Please make sure you are not disrupting rehearsal. Rehearsals are not open to any visitors.*

**Pay on time!** It is vital to the existence of the band program that all payments are made on time.

**Cheer the band on!** The band ALWAYS performs better with a large cheering block behind them. Please attend football games and competitions to cheer for them.

**Get in the Spirit!** Wear your Marching Band Spirit Wear, your show shirt or your WO Blue and White to games and competitions.

**Volunteer!** Whether you're on site with the band or working behind the scenes, we can't have a band without YOU. We ask all parents to volunteer for at least one activity during the band season. Please sign up to volunteer throughout the season.

**Donate!** Families who are able are encouraged to donate two cases of water and one case of snacks (individually wrapped, 24+) at the start of the season. Keep an eye out for additional requests throughout the season.

**Snacks/Celebrations!** The Music Boosters provide snacks at the end of practice and after competitions (the students work hard and are often hungry) and we rely on our parents/families to help us by donating items to share. Students appreciate chips, pretzels, apple sauce, crackers, cookies, and similar. On competition days, we provide bananas, string cheese, yogurt sticks and higher protein items. *We discourage nut items.* If your student has food allergies, please provide items they can eat. **Items must be individually packaged for sanitary purposes.** If you'd like to celebrate your students' birthday on a competition or rehearsal day, please contact the Boosters president to get details on the number of students and where to serve.

## Parent Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteering with the Music Boosters is a wonderful way to stay connected with your students during the busy band season, and is very helpful to keep the group running smoothly. Here is a sample list of Volunteer Positions that are available for sign up; the sign up link will be available in the weekly Music Boosters email.

### Meals

Meals are provided by WOHS Food Services to the students during Band Camp and on competition days. Parents are needed to help serve and for light clean up.

### Pit Crew

The Pit Crew helps load/unload the band trailer, and move props and instruments onto the field at competitions. Volunteers for Pit Crew should be willing to attend most performances to ensure a well-organized and efficient set up and break down process. **\*This is the most important parent volunteer opportunity.\***

### Fun Committee

The Fun Committee runs the Concessions at our Home Football games and at our Invitational, and helps sell candy/snacks and spirit wear.

### Invitational Planning Committee

We welcome more than 20 bands and host more than 1500 spectators at our Invitational. This requires months of planning and organizing, ranging from finding food trucks, planning logistics and signage, organizing volunteers and more. We encourage all parents to be part of this committee.

### Ashley Farms Fundraiser

We host a fundraiser with Ashley Farms to help students raise funds for their student accounts. Parents are needed to help organize and distribute the orders.

### Dinner of Champions

At the end of Marching Band season, we host a dinner to celebrate the achievements of our Marching Band. Help is needed to organize and staff the event.

- Check the Music Boosters website for regularly updated information: [www.wohsmusic.org](http://www.wohsmusic.org)*
- Haven't found an answer to your question! Don't Worry! Contact the Music Boosters [media@wohsmusic.org](mailto:media@wohsmusic.org) or join the Facebook WOHS Band Parents Group*