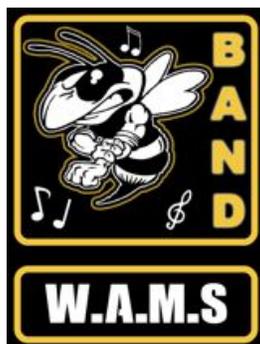


# Woodland Acres Middle School Band

## Handbook



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## WELCOME

Welcome to the Woodland Acres Middle School Band! We are happy to have you as part of our band family and know that you will learn a lot of skills that will not only be valuable to you in your musical journey but in life as well. The purpose of this handbook is to serve as a guide and source of information for students and parents. Please take the time to thoroughly read this handbook together. After reading this handbook, please sign and return the attached page.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Students will learn:

- How to read music
- Music theory, history, and terms
- Instrumental technique
- Practice skills and strategies
- Disciplined interaction in a group setting
- Organizational skills
- How to accept and utilize constructive criticism
- Proper rehearsal, concert, and performance etiquette
- Creative self-expression

## ENSEMBLE PLACEMENT

The directors place students in each band through a yearly audition. In addition to this audition, directors will take the following items into consideration:

- Instrumentation needs/ limitations
- Eligibility status
- Ability to work with others
- Overall performance and consistent progress
- Attendance at all band functions
- Attitude and behavior

Occasional changes may be made throughout the year based on the needs of the program. These will be made at the discretion of the directors using the above considerations. Students must pass band AND have a director's recommendation to be enrolled in band for the next year.

The Woodland Acres Middle School Band program is divided into four different groups:

**Beginner Band:** The Beginner Band is for 6<sup>th</sup> graders with little or no prior background in playing a band instrument. Students will be placed on instruments by the band directors through an "instrument interview" that allows the directors to determine which instrument the student will most likely be successful on. Throughout the year, students will learn how to read music, develop a basic understanding of music theory and history, proper rehearsal/concert etiquette, and how to play their instrument with correct breath support, posture, body position, and characteristic tone. Beginners will perform in at least two concerts, a solo contest, and a district sponsored beginner band evaluation performance.

**Concert Band:** The Concert Band is designed for students to build and strengthen their fundamentals as both individual musicians and part of an ensemble. Students in this band will solidify instrumental technique and practice strategies to help them become more successful, and they will work on filling in any gaps in their musical knowledge. The nature of this group allows for differentiated instruction as well as one-on-one opportunities between students and teachers.

Members of this band will perform in at least three concerts, pep rallies, one football game, a solo contest, and at the district's Pre-UIL performance. No after-school sectionals for their instrument are required of this group, but students are highly encouraged to attend.

**Symphonic Band:** The Symphonic Band is for students that can already read music, create characteristic tones on their instruments, have a solid understanding of technique on their instrument, and are knowledgeable enough to prepare music outside of the classroom. Members of this band perform in at least three concerts, pep rallies, one football game, and the district's Pre-UIL performance. They will compete in competitions such as Region Band (optional), a solo contest, and the state UIL Concert and Sight-Reading evaluation. During the fall semester, students are required to attend after-school sectionals for their specific instrument (see schedule under "Sectionals and Rehearsals"). In the spring semester, students are required to attend one after-school rehearsal (see schedule under "Sectionals and Rehearsals"). These sectionals and rehearsals will prepare students for competition performances.

**Wind Ensemble:** The Wind Ensemble is the top-performing ensemble at WAMS and is made up of the highest performing band students. Members of this group exhibit a strong understanding of music notation, sight-reading, high quality tone production, intonation, and an eagerness to perform difficult music and work on it outside of the classroom. Wind Ensemble students perform in at least three concerts, pep rallies, one football game, two 5<sup>th</sup> grade recruitment concerts, and the district's Pre-UIL performance. They will compete in competitions such as Region Band, a solo contest, and the state UIL Concert and Sight-Reading evaluation. During the fall semester, students are required to attend after-school sectionals for their specific instrument (see schedule under "Sectionals and Rehearsals"). In the spring semester, students are required to attend one after-school rehearsal (see schedule under "Sectionals and Rehearsals"). These sectionals and rehearsals will prepare students for competition performances.

## **REQUIRED MATERIALS**

The following list is what all students are required to bring to their class, rehearsals, and performances. Other items may be added at the discretion of the directors.

- A quality instrument in working condition
- All supplies related to their instrument (see supply list provided to students)
- Pencils
- Band book (provided by the school through band fee)
- Band folder with all issued music and materials (provided by the school through band fee)

If any questions or concerns arise in regards to the required materials, please contact the directors.

We understand that sometimes instruments need to be repaired and maintained. If you are renting from a music company, please ask them for a loaner instrument. If the music company does not have any loaner instruments available, send your student to class with a copy of the repair ticket/receipt and we may be able to provide a school loaner instrument (while supplies are available). In addition, when planning to service your instrument, keep in mind of the events on the calendar.

**Please note that failure to bring supplies 3 days in a row will result in a detention.**

## **CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS**

Band students are expected to be good citizens that observe all procedures set for by Galena Park ISD in addition to the following classroom expectations:

1. Follow all school policies.
2. Follow directions the first time they are given.
3. Bring your instrument in working condition as well as all necessary materials to class every day.
4. Respect others and their property. Examples of this include:
  - Raise your hand and wait silently to be called on before speaking
  - Do not interrupt students' rehearsals, sectionals, or practice time
  - Do not touch other people or things that do not belong to you
  - Do not deface school property
  - Use school-appropriate language when at school and on trips
  - Keep your locker clean
  - Keep your cases and backpacks in the locations specified by the director
  - No gum, food, or drink in the band hall
5. Non-band students are not allowed in the band hall. This is for the safety of you and your possessions!

## **SAFETY**

Band students who stay before or after school for sectionals, rehearsals, private lessons, etc. must wait in the band hall. Students who leave the building will NOT be allowed back in the building. Directors are not responsible for students who do not check in at the band hall. Please remember that non-band students are not allowed in the band hall. This is for the safety of you and your belongings.

## **BAND HALL HOURS**

The band hall will open at 7:30am every morning and close no earlier than 4:15pm (or 5:15pm after scheduled sectionals/rehearsals) every day. Students are allowed to stay in the band hall during these times to practice or quietly work on homework. If students express a desire to practice on a day that is not their scheduled sectional/rehearsal day, they may be permitted to practice in a practice room at the discretion of the band directors. Students are not allowed to be in the band hall during these times to socialize, eat, or act in a disorderly fashion. Students who do not follow the conduct expectations will be asked to leave the band hall.

## **REQUIRED EVENTS**

Band is a curricular class, meaning that rehearsals, sectionals, concerts, and contests are seen as extensions of the classroom and may be graded. In addition, the band performs its best with all members present. Therefore, students are **REQUIRED** to attend and participate in all of these functions unless excused by a director.

**Excused absence:** Absences will be excused at the discretion of the directors. Absence due to personal illness, family emergencies, or other extenuating circumstances (approved by the directors) may be considered excused. **In order for the directors to excuse the absence, students are required to bring a note, dated and signed by a parent or guardian, explaining**

**the reason for the absence. The note must also include a working telephone number.** Students who are continually ill may be required to provide a doctor's note releasing them from participation in order to ensure the well-being of the child and to reduce concerns of the band directors.

When possible, it is best to inform the directors BEFORE the absence. If advanced notice was not given, the directors may count the absence as unexcused at their discretion. If in doubt, an absence should be checked with a director. Students may be asked to complete an alternative assignment in place of their absence.

**Unexcused absence:** Appointments, tutorials, etc. will not be an excuse for an absence. Try to schedule these things outside of the time you committed to your required, graded band functions. **If such appointments cannot be avoided, reach out to the band directors prior to the event. Providing advanced notice allows the band directors to work out plans to avoid unexcused absences.** Students with an unexcused absence from any required band activity will receive a zero in the grade book until completing an alternative written assignment or project.

## **PARENT DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP**

Parents must plan transportation for their children to and from sectionals, rehearsals, concerts, contests, events, etc. If you anticipate problems in transportation, please contact the directors as soon as possible. Lack of transportation is not an excused absence. For student safety, parents are encouraged to have a plan to drop-off/pick-up students on time for band events. Directors will only be at the band hall during the times listed in "Band Hall Hours" or 30 minutes after the dismissal time listed on trip itineraries.

## **SECTIONALS AND REHEARSALS**

Band is a curricular course. This means that sectionals and rehearsals are seen as an extension of the classroom. We can require one hour of sectionals and two hours of full ensemble rehearsals weekly. Due to the nature of this course, these functions can and will be required, students can and will receive grades during sectionals/rehearsals, and students can lose points for not attending.

**Beginner Band and Concert Band:** These bands will not have weekly sectionals and will have a very limited amount of rehearsals outside of the school day as these ensembles are not considered contest bands. All required sectionals/rehearsals will be given with advanced notice.

**Symphonic Band and Wind Ensemble:** These bands will have weekly sectionals and rehearsals outside of the school day as they are both considered contest bands. Sectionals will begin the third week of school. Sectionals and rehearsals will take place from 3:45pm-4:45pm. This allows students to ride the tutorial bus home, if necessary. The schedule will change throughout the school year to accommodate the current needs of the program. All required sectionals/rehearsals will be given with advanced notice. We will not have full ensemble rehearsals until the Spring Semester, and plenty of advanced notice will be given.

We will strive to arrange a schedule that avoids conflicts with other student activities when possible. Students with conflicts should talk with a band director immediately and should never skip a rehearsal.

Students are expected to be punctual and prepared. Absences from sectionals and rehearsals must be in accordance with the attendance policy. Please remember, students that miss for routine doctor/orthodontist appointments are not considered excused and therefore should not be scheduled during your regular sectional and rehearsal times.

## **UNIFORM GUIDELINES**

### **Informal (all grades):**

School provided: WAMS Band t-shirt

Student provided: plain, full-length, solid blue jeans

7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders will wear this for pep rallies, football games, and the Fall Concert. 6<sup>th</sup> graders will wear this for all of their performances.

### **Formal (7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grades):**

School provided: white tuxedo shirt and black vest

Student provided: solid black dress pants, black dress socks, and black dress shoes

This uniform will be worn at all formal concerts and contests (example: Winter Concert, Pre-UIL, and UIL).

The band fee allows for two dry-cleanings during the school year. It is the responsibility of the band member to keep the uniform neat and clean throughout the year. All damage to school provided portions of the uniform is the student's financial responsibility.

## **INSTRUMENT STORAGE AND IDENTIFICATION**

All students must have their name and phone number or the WAMS band hall phone number fastened to the outside of their instrument case. It is also a good idea to keep this inside the instrument case as well. Please keep a record of the brand, model, and serial number of the instrument in the event that it is lost or stolen. Instruments are the responsibility of the parents and students.

Students are expected to be responsible for the location and safety of their instrument at all times. The band hall allows for safe storage of all student instruments during the school day. The band hall will remain locked during non-school hours, however, students are highly encouraged to take their instruments and all belongings home each day to ensure the safety of their property.

## **GRADING POLICY**

Students will be expected to meet the responsibilities for each band class as determined by the director. Since band is an academic music class with both in- and out-of-school activities attached, grades will reflect achievement in both areas.

### **Daily Grades (60%):**

**Practice Records** - Students will keep a practice record every week in which they record their practice time as well as their goals for practice. These are due every Wednesday. In order for students to receive full credit, a supervising adult must sign the practice record. The band hall is open every morning at 7:30am for the purpose of providing students a location to practice. If

students utilize morning practice time, the band directors are more than willing to sign as the supervising adult on the student's practice record. However, the goal of practice records is to provide a source of communication between students, parents, and teachers. Therefore, it is highly encouraged that parents sign as the supervising adult.

Students are encouraged to be honest in the recording of practice minutes. Grades will not be determined by the amount of minutes practiced. Students who turn in a completed practice record with a signature on Wednesday will receive a 100 on the assignment. Late submissions will be docked 10 points. Practice records turned in without a signature will receive no higher grade than a 70.

Because learning to play an instrument is a skill-based task, students are encouraged to practice on a daily basis. It is recommended that ALL students spend at least 10 minutes every day practicing. Students that have earned a seat in the advanced ensembles are encouraged to practice at least 30 minutes every day.

**Daily Rehearsal Grade** – Students will earn points for bringing their supplies and participating appropriately in class every day for a weekly grade. Students are expected to have their instrument (50 points), music folder (40 points), and a pencil (10 points) every day.

**After School Sectionals/Rehearsals** – Students will be graded as follows:

- On time = 100%
- Up to 5 minutes late = 85%
- After 5 minutes late = 75%
- Unexcused absence = 0%

**Quizzes** – Students may be given playing or written quizzes. Students may be quizzed during their sectional or rehearsal time as band requires these items in its curriculum.

**Other grades** – The directors may assign other grades based on participation, marking of music, or anything else that meets the needs of the curriculum.

**Major Grades (40%):**

**Tests** – Students may be given playing or written tests. Students may be tested during their sectional or rehearsal time as band requires these items in its curriculum. Students will be graded on the objectives given for that assignment.

**Concerts and Performances** – Students will receive two major grades for concerts and performances as follows:

**Concert Attendance:**

- On time = 100%
- Up to 5 minutes late = 85%
- After 5 minutes late = 75%
- Unexcused absence = 0%

**Concert Etiquette:**

- In complete uniform and following conduct expectations = 100%
- Each item of uniform missing = - 5 points

Each infraction of conduct expectations = - 10 points

Unexcused absence = 0%

**Objective Mastery Projects (aka “Pass-Offs”)** – Students will receive a given amount of time to complete a list of objectives. The objectives will either be met (passed-off) or not met (not passed-off) by the student.

**Semester Exams:** Students will take a semester exam that includes both a written portion (50%) and a performance portion (50%).

**Extra Credit:** Students will be given the opportunity to earn bonus grades throughout the year for going above and beyond the requirements given. The directors will announce these items throughout the year.

**Make-up and Re-tests:** Work may be made-up according to the GPISD grading policy. Students that were absent should meet with the directors to see what they missed and if/when they need to make up the material.

**Failing Grades:** In the case of a student repeatedly receiving low grades, the parents or guardians will be notified in attempt to resolve the issue.

**Keeping Track of Grades:** All grades are entered into Skyward. All students and parents have access to this program and are encouraged to check it on a regular basis. Students and parents are welcome to ask the directors questions about grades, but please remember that it is best to ask earlier than to wait until the last minute.

## **PRIVATE LESSONS**

At this time, the WAMS Band program is in the process of establishing a campus private lessons program to students.

Until this program has been established, students are encouraged to seek private lessons outside of WAMS. Private lessons provide students weekly individual help on their specific needs and also give students an advantage as they prepare for activities such as chair auditions, band placements, Region Band auditions, and solo contests. Students will become better individual performers and strengthen the overall WAMS Band program.

If you are interested in finding a private lessons teacher for your student, please contact the band directors for more information.

## **TRAVEL GUIDELINES**

Student conduct is expected to be at the highest level on any trip. While on the bus, students will:

- Remain seated at all times
- Sit properly in a forward position
- Keep the bus clear of food, drinks, and debris
- Keep all body parts and belongings inside the bus
- Remain silent when addressed by an adult on the bus
- Refrain from loud, boisterous talking, screaming, whistling, inappropriate jokes, etc.

- No public displays of affection

As a member of the band, you are a representative of your school and are expected to be on your best behavior. If you are in doubt of an action, don't do it! Your conduct is a reflection on the school, the band, your home, yourself, and the community.

Parents are always welcome to chaperone and students will treat them as an extension of the band staff. Respect will be shown to all adults at all times.

## **FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS**

***It is the philosophy of the WAMS Band that no student should be denied the privilege of band membership due to financial hardship. For some options in meeting financial obligations, parents should directly contact the band directors.***

All band students will pay a required band fee of \$20 at the beginning of the year that covers the band t-shirt, band folder, classroom supplies (books, music, etc.), uniform cleanings, catering/social expenses, and other items necessary for the functioning of the band program.

Students who play a school owned instrument will be required to pay the district's instrument maintenance fee. This fee is \$75 for the entire school year. This fee is necessary to allow the band program to maintain and clean the instrument borrowed from the school. It also allows the band program to provide working instruments and equipment to your student throughout their schooling at WAMS and to provide future students with equipment. Any damage incurred to the instrument will be the responsibility of the student, including but not limited to, all school-owned percussion equipment and mallets. Please send cash, check (include Driver's License # on the check), or money order made payable to WAMS Band. Parents may also pay these fees with a credit or debit card online using CHARMS or RevTrak (see band directors for more details).

All band fees and instrument maintenance fees must be paid first before money will be accepted for field trips or other extra band activities.

## **FUNDRAISING**

Due to district budget limitations and financial hardships of band members, fundraising has become a necessity and can help lower the cost to be in band. We have several fundraisers planned and participation is strongly encouraged. For students expressing financial hardships, participation in fundraisers is required. Fundraisers will be used to help pay for specified student expenses, trip transportation costs, the purchasing of supplies and equipment for the WAMS Band program, and instrument repair costs. Any other funds raised will be directed towards the sole benefit of students.

Fundraised money can only be applied to students' expenses when specified. A student cannot fundraise for another student or chaperone.

Donations are accepted to help the program and are appreciated. Any funds donated to the WAMS Band program are given to the school to be used for expenses outside of student fees and trip expenses. These include instrument repair, replacement equipment, helping families in need, and unforeseen expenses that might occur.

## **REGION BAND**

All Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band students, regardless of whether or not they audition, will be expected to learn the music as part of the curriculum and will be graded on their preparation of this music.

All Wind Ensemble students will audition for Region Band and all other 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders are encouraged to audition.

Students fortunate enough to make Region Band will attend all rehearsals and the performance. It is an honor to be selected for this band. Hundreds of students audition and not every will make it. Even if you are not selected you will have grown musically and as a person from the process of preparation and audition.

The WAMS Band program provides payment for the required contest fee. However, backing out of the contest, no matter the reason, will result in a loss of the non-refundable contest fee. Payment will then be the responsibility of the student.

## **SOLO AND ENSEMBLE**

All band members will prepare and perform a solo and/or ensemble for the GPISD Solo and Ensemble Festival.

Grades will be issued for preparation and participation in the process. The WAMS Band program pays for all contest fees. Students who fail to perform at the contest, for any reason, will be required to reimburse the band for all contest fees.

## **UIL CONCERT AND SIGHT-READING EVALUATION**

Students who are ineligible cannot attend UIL Concert and Sight-Reading. In addition, it is up to the directors' discretion as to whom they take. Sectional and rehearsal attendance, participation in Pre-UIL, conduct, and band grades will help guide the directors' decision.

## **"NO PASS, NO PLAY"**

This is a summary of House Bill 72, which became law in 1984. Students will be suspended from participation in extracurricular band activities (Region Band, Solo & Ensemble, Pre-UIL, UIL Concert and Sight-Reading, band parties/trips, etc.) if they have a grade below a 70 in any class on a report card. Eligibility is not regained until they are passing the class at the next progress report or report card. Students are allowed to play at non-contest performances as they are considered part of the curriculum and seen as an extension of the classroom.

## **FIELD TRIP ELIGIBILITY**

Field trips are a reward to students that work hard, turn in all their work on time, and have great behavior. Disqualifications for field trips include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Not turning in your band handbook signature page, medical form, and permission slip

- 3 or more practice cards not turned in on time during the 9 weeks grading period
- 2 or more tardies for the 9 weeks grading period in band
- Detention in band
- Failing band
- Unexcused absence from band concert/contest/performance
- ISS or Suspension in any class
- Failing other classes the previous 9 weeks

Remember, your band fee and instrument maintenance fee must be paid in full before we apply money to your field trips.

## **BRACES**

Many students will have braces during middle school and this generally will not create major problems in band if proper planning occurs. When braces are put on or taken off, it usually requires 2-3 weeks for the student to become accustomed to playing the instrument again. Please consider the band schedule when scheduling any type of oral work that may affect your child's playing ability. Please contact the directors if you have any questions.

### **Best time to get braces:**

Summer Break  
Winter Break  
After Spring Concert

### **Worst time to get braces:**

January – UIL Contest  
September – Thanksgiving

## **BAND PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

The band needs your help! Some areas of need are uniform fitting, computer data entry, chaperone recruiting, news and public relations, and other tasks. All band volunteers must fill out the GPISD volunteer form and be approved by the district. On the form, please indicate that you would like to help the band program. Thank you for your help!

## **ONLINE INFORMATION**

**Band website:** [woodlandacresband.com](http://woodlandacresband.com)

From here you can access the calendar, the link to CHARMS, Pictures, Videos, an online Metronome, music, other important links, and the band directors' contact information.

## **SECTIONAL AND REHEARSAL SCHEDULE**

Below is the list of **REQUIRED** sectionals and rehearsals for Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band:

### **Fall Semester (3:45pm - 4:45pm)**

Tuesdays: Flutes and French Horns

Wednesdays: Clarinets and Trombones/Euphoniums/Tubas

Thursdays: Saxophones/Oboes and Trumpets

\*Percussion will receive in-class sectionals Monday-Thursday.

### **Spring Semester (3:45pm-4:45pm)**

Tuesdays: Wind Ensemble (full band)

Wednesdays: Symphonic Band (full band)

Please note: All sectionals and rehearsal times are subject to change. Advanced notice will be given in the event that changes must take place.

## Consent and Signature Page

### **Students:**

I have read the WAMS Band Handbook and understand the requirements for being a band member. I agree to follow all of the rules and procedures set forth in this handbook. I have received a band calendar. I understand that I am an important part of the team!

As a member of the WAMS Band, I agree to always:

- Be punctual and prepared
- Practice with a purpose
- Turn in all assignments on time
- Demonstrate my best on all assignments
- Attend all sectionals, rehearsals, clinics, contests, concerts, performances, etc.
- Treat everyone with respect and maintain appropriate conduct
- Maintain my grades in all classes for eligibility and self-achievement
- Have a high standard for improvement in class and on my own

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### **Parents:**

\_\_\_ I have read the WAMS Band Handbook and want to support it and my child. I agree to enforce all of the rules and procedures set forth in this handbook. I have also received the calendar for the year.

### **Consent to use Remind 101**

(What is Remind101? Remind101 is free messaging service that allows the band directors to keep you informed of classroom activities and assignments. The program allows teachers and parents to send quick messages through text, push notifications, or email without revealing personal contact information.)

\_\_\_ I give consent for my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to use Remind 101 during the academic year to allow the band directors to pass information and reminders to students about rehearsals and band events.

\_\_\_ I do NOT give consent for my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to use Remind 101 during the academic year to allow the band directors to pass information and reminders to students about rehearsals and band events.

### **Consent to be Photographed and Published**

\_\_\_ I give consent for my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to be photographed during the academic year by the WAMS Band during rehearsals and band events. I further authorize that the photographs may be published for any band related purpose including the band website.

\_\_\_ I do NOT give consent for my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to be photographed during the academic year by the WAMS Band during rehearsals and band events.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date