



Wesclin Middle School

Band Handbook

Welcome to the Wesclin Middle School Band! With a new school year come new opportunities for continued growth of our band program at WMS. In order to take advantage of these opportunities, it is imperative that everyone be made aware of the goals, expectations, and procedures for our band members. This handbook has been prepared to inform all families of the various components of our program and to assist you in planning your calendar for the year. Please note carefully the enclosed Calendar of Events—it is vital that every member of the band is present for all performances; you are all important to our success.

I am looking forward to the year and the musical and personal growth that each student will achieve. Of course, this cannot be possible without parental support and involvement. I appreciate you taking time to read this handbook and hope that it will be a good source of information throughout the year

PHILOSOPHY OF MUSIC

Our middle school band program is designed to promote a basic understanding and appreciation for music, which will continue throughout the student's high school band experiences and the rest of their lives.

Objectives of the WMS Band:

1. To develop the technical skills necessary to play a musical instrument and to develop the skills necessary to read music.
2. To promote the success of the individual student as well as the WMS Band Program. **MUSIC IS FUN!** However, there is no fun in mediocrity. Each individual—including each student, the director, and each parent—must be aware of his/her individual responsibilities and be willing to sacrifice individual desires for the good of the band.
3. To increase the amount of fun and satisfaction each student receives from being in band. *What you get out of band depends on how much you put into it.*

The emphasis is on learning concepts rather than on learning songs.

This emphasis brings students to a higher level of performance.

TEACHER EXPECTATIONS (WHAT I EXPECT FROM YOU)

- ❖ **BE NEAT** – This begins with having your music marked correctly in pencil, keeping the band room and storage area clean, and keeping your instrument in the proper working order. **No food or drinks are allowed in the rehearsal room, including gum.**

- ❖ **BE ON TIME** – Students must be in the room by 2:18 and seated, ready to begin rehearsal by 2:21. This means instrument, music, and pencil ready to go by 2:21.
- ❖ **BE ORGANIZED** – Check the board to see the rehearsal schedule for the day. Know what playing test is coming up and work toward achieving success. Keep performance dates in the back of your mind and use those to gauge your practicing.
- ❖ **BE WILLING TO WORK** – If you want to have a great concert, *everyone* must give that extra effort. When the director steps in front of the band, all talking must immediately stop. Rehearsal begins at this point and your full attention is expected. Demonstrate a positive attitude at all times. Negative comments directed at another student on ANY basis will not be tolerated in this classroom.
- ❖ **USE YOUR TIME WISELY** – While the director is rehearsing another section of the band, use that time to check a fingering, a rhythm, or just listen. Don't waste time!

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS (WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME)

- ❖ I will provide clear and detailed instruction, examples and other aids to learning.
- ❖ I will respect individual abilities, help each person succeed and will consistently and fairly apply school and classroom rules.
- ❖ I will be available after school or by special arrangement before school to help you work on your music or instrument.
- ❖ I will have a sense of humor!!

CHAIR ASSIGNMENTS

AUDITIONS – At the beginning of the year there may be an audition to determine seating placement. This test will be played for the band director in private.

CHALLENGES – A student may challenge the seat directly above him during the four weeks immediately following each concert. Music for these challenges will be discussed with the individuals as they occur.

PERFORMANCES

By participating in band, every student has made a commitment to always do his or her best for the good of the team (yes, band is a TEAM). The entire band relies on ALL its members to accomplish its goals. It is through performance and preparation for performance that a great deal of learning occurs. As such, several performances are scheduled throughout the year and will act like a MAJOR test in other classes. These dates can be found elsewhere in this handbook and are also on the district website. Attendance is required for all performances. Absences from performances are only excused in the event of an extreme emergency: serious illness or hospitalization of the student, death in the

family, or other rare reasons deemed excusable by the band director at least two weeks in advance for planned absences. Excused absences will require make-up work to be completed, as determined on an individual basis.

AWARDS

Band awards are given in the spring of each year to reward outstanding musicianship and scholarship within the program.

LESSONS

Students in the WMS Band are **STRONGLY** encouraged to take private lessons. Studying with a professional is one of the most fundamental keys to a successful band program and individual. Many students at this level can reach new heights by simply studying with a capable high school student (as recommended by their high school band director)! Mr. Washburn would be more than willing to help locate a private instructor for you.

COMMUNICATION

Phone: 224-7341, Mr. Washburn spends the majority of his day at WHS – that extension is 5659. This is the best number to use. His extension at the MS is 1219, and he can usually be reached there after school.

E-mail: washburr@wesclin.org (this is **BY FAR** the best way to communicate with me)

Website: www.wesclinmsband.weebly.com (not updated often, but some useful info will hopefully be added soon!)

PRACTICE

Practicing is a very important part of being in band. Students are encouraged to practice 20 minutes each day outside of class. Rehearsal is not for working on individual parts or problems. Nothing is more counter-productive (or more boring for other students) than having to waste rehearsal time on individual problems caused by lack of practice. The key to avoiding this problem is adequate individual (at home or practice room) practice.

Guidelines for Individual Practice

- 🎵 **Regular Schedule** – set up a regular time and then stick to it. Let practice become a routine.
- 🎵 **Practice Daily** – 20 to 30 minutes per day, five days each week, is better than a one-hour session twice a week.
- 🎵 **Quiet Location** – Practice where others will not disturb you and where you will not disturb others if possible.
- 🎵 **Tools** – Use of metronomes, tuners, and recorders are always beneficial.

🎵 Warm Up – You must warm up like an athlete does. Begin by playing music in a comfortable range at a comfortable dynamic level. Begin with long tones. Play scales (or rudiments) to warm up hand and finger muscles. Lip slurs are excellent for brass players.

🎵 What To Practice – After warming up, you should work on **concert music or solo pieces**, move on to **book work** (Sound Innovations for example) to improve technique, **sight read**, and finally play something just for **fun**.

🎵 Difficult Passages – Play **slowly** to establish the correct fingerings/positions/stickings (be sure to have a fingering/position chart nearby), **count** out rhythms to make sure they are correct, gradually **speed up** until playing the correct tempo without a mistake (use a metronome).

🎵 Make Music – Music is more than just playing notes. You should always be striving for a good sound with proper articulation and dynamics.

**BAND MEMBERS ALWAYS HAVE
SOMETHING TO PRACTICE!!!!**

SCHOOL-OWNED EQUIPMENT

Students who use school-owned instruments/equipment (usually percussion and other larger instruments) accept full responsibility for care of each instrument. No student should touch a school-owned instrument unless it is checked out to you. Our school does not charge a rental fee like many schools; however, you will be held responsible for damage due to misuse or carelessness. Instrument repair costs can be quite high, so be sure to properly care for all equipment.

INSTRUMENTS AND EQUIPMENT

1. Each band member is required to keep his or her instrument in its assigned storage location where it should be picked up after school for home practice. Please have a name tag on each instrument case. Instrument lockers should remain locked at all times.
2. Do not touch anyone else's instrument, including percussion equipment.
3. You are responsible for making sure that your instrument is in good playing condition, and that you have all needed accessories including reeds and oils.
4. If your instrument is not working, show it to Mr. Washburn first. Simple repairs can sometimes be handled at school rather than having to take the instrument to a repair shop. Parents are welcome to choose their repair technician, but Nottelmann Music sends a representative to our school each week (Tuesday mornings) to pick up and deliver repairs. They have a very good repair department and fair prices. I may also be able to arrange for a

loaner instrument from them. NEVER attempt repairs to a band instrument using tools from home!

5. Do not store extra items in your case unless there is a special storage section in your case—it is an INSTRUMENT case, not a book case or shirt case or lunch box.
6. Students playing reed instruments must be sure to remove the reed from the mouthpiece before putting the instrument in its case and properly store the reed.
7. Care should be taken when leaving your instrument unattended (don't leave it on the ground, etc.)
8. Each family should have a written record at home of the make, model, and serial number of your instrument. School insurance does NOT cover theft or damage to instruments. Contact your insurance agent (homeowner's policy) to check coverage.

SUPPLIES

All students should bring to class the following items:

1. Instrument in good working order
2. Music/folder
3. Pencil
4. Good attitude

Listed below are recommendations on supplies needed for each instrument.

Flute – tuning rod, cleaning swab, polishing cloth

Oboe – minimum of two working reeds, case for water, cleaning swab, cork grease, polishing cloth

Clarinet/Saxophone – three working reeds (please begin using high-quality reeds if you don't already), mouthpiece cap, cork grease, cleaning swab, polishing cloth, neck strap for saxophones

Trumpet – valve oil, polishing cloth, tuning slide grease, mouthpiece brush, mutes as necessary for music

French Horn – rotary oil, polishing cloth, tuning slide grease, mouthpiece brush

Trombone – slide cream and small spray bottle (recommended) OR slide oil, tuning slide grease, cleaning rod, polishing cloth, mouthpiece brush

Baritone and Tuba – valve oil, polishing cloth, tuning slide grease, mouthpiece brush

Percussion – sticks and mallets for primary instruments including snare sticks, timpani mallets, bell/xylophone mallets, vibe/marimba mallets (optional), pitch pipe, and a stick bag.

These supplies can all be purchased at school at a reduced cost. Students should plan to take care of any purchases before or after school or during lunch.

UNIFORMS

Concert dress will consist of very nice dress clothes. Understand this is part of the complete package for a successful band performance that includes great musicianship and excellent behavior. Provided below are some suggestions on what to and what not to wear to band concerts:

- No denim or athletic wear (including athletic shoes or socks)
- Dresses or skirts should go below the knee when seated
- No tops that are sleeveless, spaghetti straps, etc. should be worn...shoulders should be covered
- Pants should be very dressy with matching shoes and socks
- Ties always make boys look nice
- Shorts or capri-type pants are not acceptable

EVENTS

While there are several events the band participates in together, there are also opportunities for individuals to excel including Illinois Music Education Association events, Clinton County Junior High Music Festival, and sometimes university honor band festivals. When a student signs up for an event, it is expected they will carry out their plans to participate except in the case of an emergency. If an entry fee has been paid by the school and the student chooses, after the announced deadline, not to attend the event he/she will be responsible for repaying the entry fee.

If school is canceled or dismissed early because of bad weather, the band will not participate in that evening's activities.

GENERAL CLASSROOM RULES

1. No food or beverage in the rehearsal room (including gum).
2. Music stands are for music! They are not to be leaned on or abused in any way.
3. Treat the chairs with respect. These are specially designed chairs for music students and quite expensive. Do not scratch names or phrases onto them or deposit your gum underneath.
4. No talking while the director is on the podium.
5. Always sit in your assigned seat.
6. Instrument cases should be properly stored in lockers and music should be placed in the music cabinet.
7. Do not go into the band office without permission.
8. Good posture is of great importance at all times.

GRADING POLICY

Band is a unique course at Wesclin Middle School. It has curricular requirements, just as any other academic discipline, but it also has out of class time requirements. The strength of the band program is the consolidation of all of these requirements. The level of commitment from each individual student is the driving force behind the organization and is reflected in the level of achievement reached by the individual and the program.

Grades will be awarded in the following general areas:

- ❖ **Performances** – These are viewed as major tests. In general there are two of these each semester. A performance is a learning experience that cannot be duplicated in a rehearsal hall or practice room; the level of concentration required in a public performance assists each student to develop an insight into their own level of performance; a performance is an important evaluation tool. Absences from performances are **ONLY** excused in the event of an extreme emergency: serious illness or hospitalization of the student, death in the family, or other rare reasons deemed excusable by the band director in advance. Notification should come from the parent/guardian via email or written notice. Excused absences will require make-up work to be completed, as determined on an individual basis.
- ❖ **Daily Points** – Rehearsals are the means by which students learn. Points will be awarded for positive participation. Excessive talking, not being prepared (forgot music, no pencil, etc.) will cause a student not to earn all possible points.
- ❖ **Sectionals** – A schedule for sectionals is currently in development. Stay tuned for more details! *STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ASK MR. WASHBURN FOR EXTRA HELP AS NEEDED!*
- ❖ **Written Work/Technology** – There will be some written work, including worksheets on musical subjects. We will also utilize Google Classroom for submission of audio and/or video assignments.
- ❖ **Performance Evaluation** – This component will allow the director an opportunity to chart the progress of each student individually, these playing tests will take place throughout each quarter.

WMS Band

Calendar of Events

2019-2020

*October 14	ILMEA Auditions	Mascoutah Middle School
October 17	Fall Concert	7:00 PM
*November 2	ILMEA Festival	SIU Carbondale
December 16	Winter Concert	7:00 PM
*January 23	Clinton County Music Festival	
March 9	Concert	7:00 PM
May 7	Spring Concert	7:00 PM

* = does not involve all members

8th Grade

June 11	Parade rehearsals begin
June 20	Parade in New Baden
July 27-31	HS Percussion Camp
August 3-7	HS Band Camp

A more specific summer/fall 2020 schedule will be provided for 8th grade students in the spring.