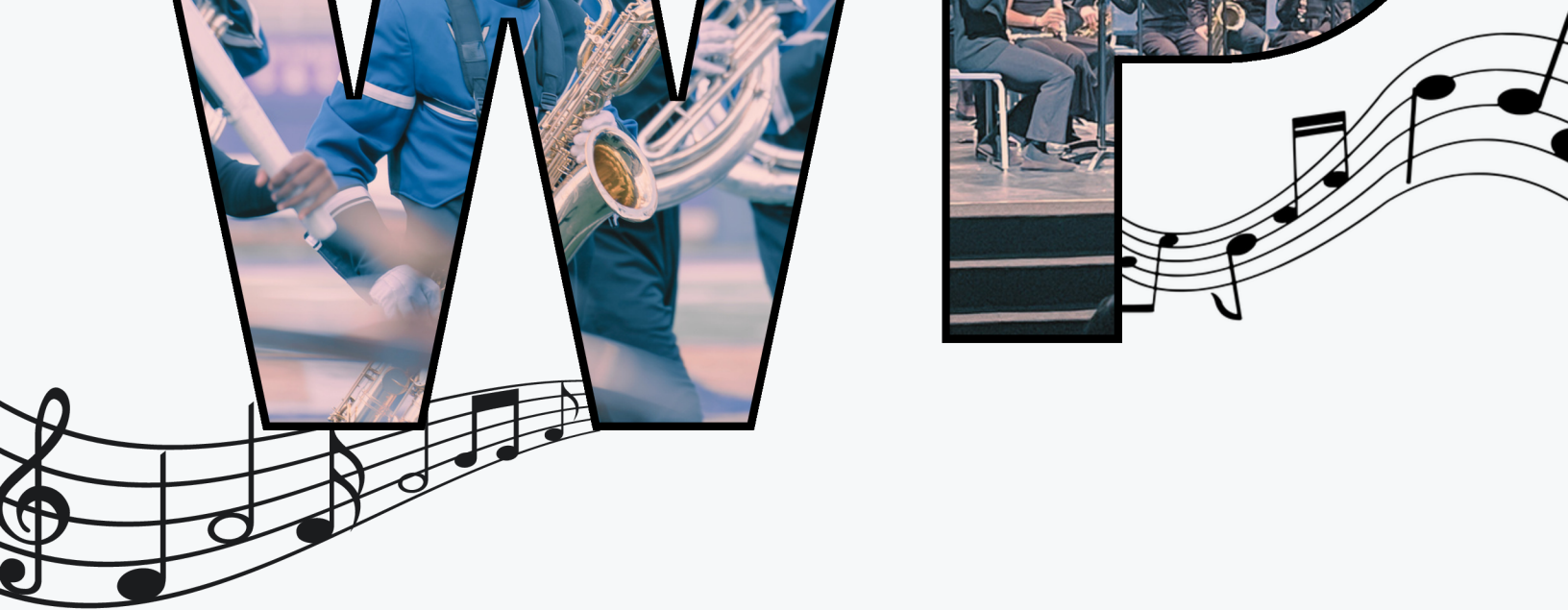




WEST POTOMAC HIGH SCHOOL



BAND PARENT GUIDE



Important Information
Learn about our program
WolverineBand.com





INTRODUCTION

This handbook was created to help answer questions that parents and guardians have about what to expect when their student joins the West Potomac Band Program. The Band Booster Organization developed this handbook with you, the parent/guardian, in mind!

If you have additional questions, do not hesitate to ask - we are here to help!

A Note from Alumni Band Parents...

You might be wondering how can I best support my band student? Here are the keys to success:

Stay Informed & Communicate

Attend monthly Band Booster meetings to stay up-to-date on band activities and schedule changes. Read the band handbook, emails, and other communications carefully. Keep your family calendar updated and check the band website regularly. If conflicts arise, encourage your student to communicate with the band director as soon as possible.

Support & Encourage Your Student

Foster a team mindset—"we before me." Encourage a positive attitude, daily practice, and staying ahead on music assignments. Remind them that being prompt is essential and that tardiness can delay an entire rehearsal.

Get Involved & Show Your Support

Volunteer for a role that interests you—parent involvement is crucial to the program's success. Attend competitions, performances, and concerts to cheer on the band. While your student may not always acknowledge your support, they will notice it.

Keep the Big Picture in Mind

Everything we do is for the students and the program. Your engagement makes a difference!

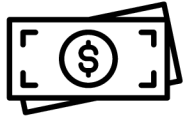


HOW IT ALL RUNS

The Band Program is a large, dynamic operation and its success depends on both fundraising and volunteer support. While there are many ways to get involved, some committees and activities are especially critical because they generate essential funding and require a large team of volunteers to run smoothly.

Your time and effort directly impact the band's ability to thrive—whether by helping at key fundraisers or pitching in where extra hands are needed most. Plus, getting connected helps make a school as big as West Potomac feel like home.

Financials 101



There are two revenue streams to pay for band expenses: School Fees and Fundraising.

School Fees

These school fees allow the band director to pay for music, show design and drills, uniforms, buses for trips, instrument repairs, staff, and other essential band items. These fees are issued through the school into My School Bucks and are based on what ensembles your student participates in. These include a concert band fee, marching band fee, marching band camp fee, jazz band fee, percussion ensemble fee, and winter guard fee. Some of these fees will be reduced for students who qualify for free and reduced lunch.

Fundraising

The Band Boosters play a critical role in funding the program beyond what school fees cover. We help pay for show props, sound system upgrades, truck rentals, chaperone bag items, competition fees, uniforms, instrument repairs, student leader training, senior gifts, insurance, business fees, and instructor staff costs.

To support these expenses, the Boosters rely on donations, sponsorships, and a variety of fundraisers. Fundraising events include car washes, restaurant nights, Tag Day, and the largest effort—running concessions at Varsity Football games. Additionally, we occasionally request in-kind donations, such as food for marching band camp, football night dinners, and concession supplies for games and assessment events. We also encourage each band family to make a voluntary, tax-deductible contribution of \$50 to help sustain the program. Throughout the year, the Boosters actively seek sponsorships from local businesses to further support the band.

Volunteering 101

The Band Program relies on parent volunteers to support essential activities, from chaperoning competitions and assisting with uniforms to running our biggest fundraisers like Concessions and Tag Day. We also need help with event logistics, hospitality, pit crew, senior recognition, and photography to ensure a smooth and memorable experience for our students. Whether you can lend a hand at a single event or take on a bigger role, there are plenty of ways to get involved and make a difference!

Volunteer shifts are found on the band website through the SignUpGenuis link.



COMMUNICATION

Throughout the year, communication will come from the Band Director as well as the Band Boosters. These include rehearsal times, critical volunteer needs, and other important information to share. Depending on the time of the year, there will be multiple emails a week or once every couple of weeks.

Address

West Potomac High School
Attn: Band Boosters President
6500 Quander Road
Alexandria, Virginia 22307

Contact Information

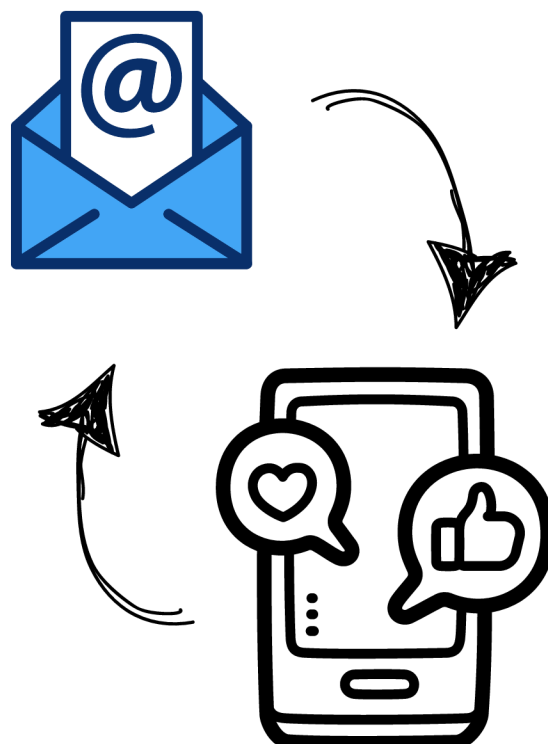
- Website: www.wolverineband.com
- Email: wphsbandnews@gmail.com

Social Media (Boosters)

- Public Facebook account
- Private Facebook
- X (formerly Twitter) @westpoband

Social Media (Students)

- Student led Band Instagram
- Student led Color Guard Instagram





USUAL SCHEDULE

As the event dates get finalized, you will receive email communications and the events will be posted to wolverineband.com.

This schedule is subject to change for a variety of reasons.



****Note:** the end times for marching band are when the band stops practicing; however, they usually have a team huddle to discuss items and then they have to pack up their equipment before they can leave the school.



Summer

- Marching band camp is usually for 3 weeks before school start (end of July to August)
 - 1st week: Tuesday-Friday all day (8am-6pm**)
 - Note: Monday on the 1st week is when marching band leadership meets but the entire band starts on Tuesday the 1st week
 - 2nd week: Monday-Friday all day (8am-6pm**)
 - 3rd week: Monday-Friday all afternoon (2-7pm**)
 - Last Friday is the Parent Preview Show & Band Family Dinner (7pm)
 - Last Friday is usually the WPHS Open House for students and parents (3-5pm)



Fall

- Marching band practice is after school during August, September, and October
 - Mondays - no practice after school
 - Tuesdays & Thursdays - 3:30-6pm** (band practices in the senior parking lot)
 - Wednesdays - 6pm-9pm** (band practices on the football field)
 - Fridays - on home football game days - the band stays after school for practice, gets a team dinner, and then changes into marching band uniform and heads up to the field prior to kick off
- Football games played during August, September, October and sometimes early November
 - The marching band plays at every home Varsity Football game, usually at half time but sometimes before the game (at homecoming); they stay and play for the entire game
 - There are about 5 home Varsity Football games, either on Friday or Thursday night
 - Marching band parents work the team dinners, pit crew, and concessions at the Varsity Football games

- Competitions on Saturdays during September, October and sometimes early November
 - The marching band plays at about 5 competitions during the fall
 - Once the dates are announced, block off the entire day for your student. The call time at the school could be early morning, late morning, or early afternoon and could be coming home *very* late.
 - Sometimes sections will go out to breakfast together as a group and then they head to WPHS for warm up, practice, changing into marching band uniform, loading onto buses, another warm up at the competition school, performance, and then awards ceremony before heading back to WPHS
 - Marching band parents volunteer for competitions as a chaperone or as a member of the pit crew
- Tag Day - when West Potomac Performing Arts Department students—band, chorus, orchestra, and guitar—canvas the West Potomac community asking for monetary donations (our biggest fundraiser of the year!)
 - On a Saturday in September from 8am-4pm
 - All hands on deck: all students and lots of parent volunteers
- Fall Band Concert
 - October in the evening & wear Concert Black
 - Typically on a Thursday at 7pm in Springbank Auditorium. Families and friends are encouraged to attend.

Winter

- Jazz Band is after school and starts after marching band ends in November/December
 - Is an official WPHS class that is on the student's schedule and they earn a grade (or they can take this class as a Pass/Fail)
 - Tuesdays after school from 3:15-5pm
- Percussion Ensemble is after school and starts after marching band ends in November/December
 - Is an official WPHS class that is on the students schedule and they earn a grade (or P/F)
 - Monday after school from 3:15-5pm
- All District Auditions
 - Usually the 1st Friday & Saturday in December
 - Band students can audition to be in the All District X Band (All Star or Honor Band)
- Concert Band Rehearsal is after school and starts after marching band ends in November
 - Wednesdays after school; either from 3:15-5pm or 6-8pm
- Winter Band Concert
 - Middle of December in the evening & wear Concert Black
 - Typically on a Thursday at 7pm in Springbank Auditorium. Families and friends are encouraged to attend.
- District All-Star Jazz Auditions
 - Middle of January

- Jazz & Percussion Concert
 - In February in the evening & wear Concert Black
 - Typically on a Tuesday or Thursday at 7pm in the Springbank Arts Building. Families and friends are encouraged to attend.
- Pre-Assessment Band Concert
 - Late February in the evening & wear Concert Black
 - Typically on a Thursday at 7pm in Springbank Auditorium. Families and friends are encouraged to attend.
- District Assessment
 - Usually the 1st Friday & Saturday in March
 - Band parents volunteer to run the District Assessment at WPHS

Spring

- Little Beats with the Wolverines
 - Students visit with pre-school students showing instruments and playing a few kid-friendly tunes
- March Madness Concert
 - Late March in the evening & wear Concert Black
 - Helps raise money for band students in need of music lessons
- Jazz Band and Percussion Ensemble classes continue
- Concert Band Rehearsals continue
- Spring Band Concert
 - Middle of May in the evening & wear Concert Black
- Jazz & Percussion Concert
 - End of May in the evening & wear Concert Black
 - Typically on a Tuesday or Thursday at 7pm in the Springbank Arts Building. Families and friends are encouraged to attend.
- Woodwinds and Brass students audition for next year's Concert Band placement
- End of Year Banquet
 - Families join us at the end of year dinner banquet to celebrate all of the accomplishments of the school year
- WPHS Graduation
 - WPHS Band plays at graduation at EagleBank Arena
 - Transportation provided to and from WPHS

Band Booster meetings are the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7pm near the band room. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend to hear the most up-to-date band news.



The West Potomac Band program has been designated an Honor Band since the late 1980s and most recently this past year!



FAQS



Do I really need to volunteer?

Until a cloning machine is invented, yes. As the saying goes, “many hands make light work” and that goes for the Band Program as well.

Do I need to buy anything for the uniform for marching band?

Only Black crew socks. Plan for a few extra pairs to make it through the season.

How does my student get to all these competitions?

Transportation to all band events will be by school bus or coach bus per FCPS policy. Students are required to travel to each event with the band; however, they may travel home from any event with their parents. Parents must sign their student out in person with the Director. Students may only be checked out by their parent/guardian unless written permission is provided in advance.

How do I get cool band gear?

The official Spirit Wear online store is open for two weeks during band camp in August and merchandise is delivered by mid-September just in time for Marching Band Season. The store reopens for holiday gift shopping in November. For band signs and magnets, those are available year round!

Where should I drop off my band student?

Students should be dropped off on the back of Springbank Arts Center, at door 7. Please park in a parking spot and let your student get their instrument and bag out of the vehicle. This prevents a backlog of vehicles winding around the school.

Does the school have instruments?

The school will provide instruments that are necessary for the overall balance of the band, such as tenor sax, bari sax, bass clarinet, French horn, euphonium, tuba, and various percussion instruments. Students must provide all other instruments. School instruments are checked out at the beginning of the year in good working condition and it is the responsibility of each student to maintain the instrument while it is in his/her care. Students may elect to pay a \$30 instrument maintenance fee for each instrument checked out to them. This maintenance fee will cover any minor damage or repairs needed throughout the school year. Any recurring or major damage that occurs while an instrument is checked out to the student must be paid for by that parent/student.



For additional marching band camp information, visit wolverineband.com/band-camp-resources/

What does my student need to wear for concerts?

- Option 1: Black concert dress
 - Style 4855AA-E: <http://bit.ly/45iZVfA> or VERY SIMILAR in style/cut/etc.
- Option 2: Solid black long-sleeve button-down shirt with collar and black bowtie OR solid black long-sleeve dress top (3/4 sleeve length is also fine); solid black long dress pants (slacks) or skirt that covers the entire leg (when you sit down, it NEEDS to cover your ankles)
- Option 3: Black tuxedo jacket and pants, with white tuxedo shirt and black bowtie. These or VERY SIMILAR in style/cut/etc.
 - Tuxedo coat (4501): <https://bit.ly/3fJ6YKm>
 - Tuxedo pants (6501): <https://bit.ly/3fKxlj2>
 - Wing-tip tuxedo shirt (2181): <https://bit.ly/3MbGgWQ>
 - Bowtie (8250): <https://bit.ly/3RG1w8n> ("royal satin," BLACK)
- Shoes: ALL students need to wear black close-toed dress shoes (not sneakers) and black socks that cover your ankle (if socks are normally worn with that shoe style).

Parents are responsible for providing your own concert wear. If needed the band does have a small selection of used dresses and tuxedos which may be available to borrow.

Are there scholarships available?

Students that qualify for free and reduced lunch have discounted fees. The Band Program also has access to a special fund that supports private lessons for students who desire it. Talk to the Director for additional information.



GLOSSARY

Brief but witty definitions about the Program.

- **All-District and All-Virginia Band** – Elite bands made of players from many schools selected by audition.
 - All-District:
 - Auditions are held locally in Fairfax County in early December
 - The event is held in February with a Thursday evening rehearsal, all day rehearsal on Friday (excused from school), and a rehearsal and concert on Saturday
 - All-Virginia:
 - Auditions are held by invitation only at James Madison University and are typically in February
 - The event is held in Richmond in April
- **Assessment** - Like a standardized test, two held each year, one for marching band held in the fall, and one for concert band in the spring.

- **Band Banquet** – End of school year event for band members, guard, and their families. Typically the theme of next year's marching band show is announced here.
- **Band Room** – Center of band activities in a school, your student's second home. In Springbank section of the High School facility.
- **Band Time** – Arriving at least 15 minutes before the scheduled time. This allows your student to get their instrument ready for the event/practice to start on time.
- **Battery** – The marching percussion usually snares, tenors, and bass drums, same as Drum Line.
- **Bibbers** - Marching Band pants. Part of the Marching Band uniform.
- **Caption Awards** – Awarded in marching contest. Depending on the competition, Caption Awards can be awarded for Preliminary competition and for Finals competition. These awards are: High Music, High Visual, and High General Effect.
- **Color/Winter Guard** – Auxiliaries, or visual ensemble, who spin flags, rifles, sabers, and dance to enhance the marching shows during marching season. During the concert season, Winter guard performs their own show at contests around the state.
- **Concert Season** – Roughly December through May, the band parent's busiest time of year, see also Marching Season.
- **Concession Stand** – 1. The Band Boosters largest revenue source held during football games. 2. Fun place to work and earn money for the band program.
- **Contests, Concerts** – 1. Competitions among concert bands playing contest music before a panel of judges. 2. The focus of life in the spring.
- **Contests, Marching** – 1. Competitions among marching bands before a panel of judges. 2. The focus of life in the fall.
- **Dinkles** - Marching band shoes worn with marching band uniforms and suitable for no other purpose. Usually black with scuff marks, frequently forgotten or lost by band members.
- **Drill** -The specific movements, formations, and maneuvers the band performs on the field. Your student is an important dot within these formations that can be viewed on the UDB app.
- **Eligibility** – The condition of being able, under state rules, to participate in a band activity. Fear of this may inspire band members to study.
- **Ensemble** - Yes, it is an outfit, but here it is a group of musicians who perform together.
- **Fall** – 1. What marchers do after they try to march backwards. 2. Marching Season.
- **Finals Competition** – The top 10 or 12 bands based on a 100-point scale after preliminary competition in a marching contest. These bands are ranked based on a 100-point scale to determine the Grand Champion.

- **Front Ensemble** – see Pit Instruments and Equipment.
- **Football** – A game played on a marching field to entertain the audience while the band is getting ready to perform.
- **Flags** – Large pieces of colored cloth on poles waved by Color Guard auxiliaries.
- **Hat Boxes** – Carrying cases for marching uniform hats that are often left behind in the band room at the beginning of band trip or on band buses at end of band trip.
- **High School** – Secondary school, the level at which band parenting becomes intense.
- **Honor Band** - Bands achieving superior ratings at the state marching festival and district concert festival are recognized with the highest honor that can be bestowed upon bands by the VBODA.
- **Judges, Marching Contest** – Eagle-eyed, golden-eared infinitely demanding persons who can spot un-raised band member toes at a distance of 200 yards, at night, through fog while detecting one slightly out of tune clarinet during a brass fortissimo.
- **Lyre** – Device that is supposed to hold flip-folder on instrument while playing in the football stands.
- **Loading Crew** – Loosely organized group of super fun parents, guardians, and friends, who load/unload the trucks for competitions. See also Pit Crew.
- **Marching Band Uniforms** – Dinkles, black socks, black bibbers, show-themed uniform top, hat (or shako).
- **Marching Field** – A field of 100 yards in length, marked in 5-yard increments used for marching band performances. There are some sports (such as football and soccer) which can be played on a marching field.
- **Marching Practice** – Band member's principal waking activity from August through November.
- **Marching Season** – Roughly August through November, the band's busiest time of year.
- **Pit Crew** – Band parents who help push front ensemble equipment on and off the field during a show or competition. No need for a gym membership - this is your exercise opportunity.
- **Pit Instruments and Equipment** – Large non-marchable instruments and equipment moved onto marching field sidelines by band parents (see Pit Crew). Includes, but is not limited to, marimbas, timpani, bass drums, tenor drums, wood blocks, trap sets, vibraphones, xylophones, amplifiers, speakers, podiums, drum major stands, gongs, chimes, bells, cymbals, electronic keyboards, generator, sound board, and props.
- **Practice** – 1. Individual work your student should be doing in their “spare” time, 2. Concert or marching activity usually held in the band room or on the practice field.