

WHM BANDS

West Hall Middle School Band Program Handbook 2019-2020

West Hall Bands Mission Statement

The mission of the West Hall Band Program is to develop musicians using the highest standards of music education and performance; provide students with opportunities for personal growth and leadership; encourage students to become lifelong learners and supporters of the arts; and promote the place and value of music in our community.

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LETTER FROM MS. FOSTER

Dear Band Members and Advocates,

Welcome to the West Hall Middle School Band family! I am Ms. Foster, your band director, and this is my second year here at WHMS. Music is one of the best things you can invest in, and I hope that you will remember this experience for a lifetime. The ultimate goal of the band is to create people who love learning, and to foster a lifelong love and understanding of music.

The band program is a cohesive 6th grade through 12th grade program. In your time here, you will get to know me as well as Mrs. Wilson-Fields, the high school band director. Graduating from elementary school to middle school, or middle school to high school, can be tough, and it often takes time to find your place in the crowd. But participating in band means you already have a group of built-in friends who share your interests! Some of my closest friends, even as an adult, are people I grew up with through music.

There are a multitude of benefits to being in band. Playing music is fun! Students will understand music, which is an important skill. They will also take the deep, critical thinking they learn in band to their academic classes and various other parts of their lives. Band members gain so many social skills and leadership opportunities. Some will even go on to continue playing music through college, or even make a career out of it. Most importantly, band teaches team building, because we truly are a team. Students are part of something bigger than themselves, and as a group, we are greater than the sum of our parts.

2018-19 was a great year for us. We played four concerts, plus our Large Group Performance Evaluation field trip where we performed for judges and other bands from all over the region. We played for a basketball game as well as the rising sixth grader visit. Many of our 7th graders got to attend a University of North Georgia band concert. Throughout the year, we brought in instructors to work with each section individually. We hope to bring them in even more this year!

This year, we are adding even more special events for the band. We will continue to do four concerts per year, plus LGPE. The Halloween concert will actually be our first collaborative concert with the high school band! We are changing up some of our fundraising by introducing the Rockathon, a band party where students decorate rocking chairs and collect donations for each hour that they “rock.” Finally, the eighth graders will be taking a field trip to the Southern Star Music Festival at Six Flags Over Georgia! Due to this and other ambitious events this year, I hope we will have quite a bit more parents involvement to form the West Hall Middle School Band Association for band families.

The purpose of this handbook is to answer any and all of your questions, update you on the coming school year, and to get you inspired for this year of music. Please make sure you read the entire handbook, keep it in a place that is easy to find, and add the events on the band calendar to your personal calendar. Once you have done this, please sign and return the Signature Page at the end. There is also a digital handbook and calendar on the band [website](http://westhallband.org/whms), westhallband.org/whms. Make sure you follow the band on Instagram for updates @westhallmsband.

I am so excited for this school year. Congratulations on continuing your music education this year in band! Go Spartans!

Lindsey Foster

LETTER FROM MR. ETHAN BANKS

Dear WHMS Band Members and Supporters,

Welcome to another wonderful adventure in Sparta! I am so excited that you have chosen the Band as a way to enhance your educational experience at West Hall. As a former middle school, high school, and college band member, I can personally attest to the wonderful journey upon which you will embark this year. The lessons learned in a performance program are ones that can be employed in every aspect of your life from now on. Hard work, dedication, teamwork, and service are skills that will be developed this year in addition to the musical talents you already possess.

Your dedicated and talented directors – Mrs. Katy Wilson-Fields (HS) and Ms. Lindsey Foster (MS) - are truly committed to growing you as both musicians and leaders for our community. Members of school band programs consistently represent the best that we have to offer, and I firmly believe that your choice to participate in the Band of Silver will shape you into the best students and young people that you can be.

We want your Band experience (students AND parents) to be as positive and rewarding as possible. Active participation, hard work, and commitment will truly make your time in the West Hall Band one of the highlights of your Spartan journey! Make it a great year everyone, and as always: Go Spartans!

Sincerely,



Ethan D. Banks
Principal, West Hall Middle School

ABOUT THE CLASS

Ms. Lindsey Foster

lindsey.foster@hallco.org

Course Website:

Canvas/Charms

Band Website:

www.westhallband.org/whms.html

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will....

1. Play a varied repertoire of music on their instrument of choice.
2. Apply understanding of musical concepts and demonstrate mastery through rehearsals and individual assessment.
3. Listen, analyze, describe, and evaluate musical performances.
4. Demonstrate appropriate rehearsal skills.
5. Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts and disciplines outside the arts.
6. Demonstrate performance skills by giving concerts.
7. Develop social skills and teamwork.

REHEARSAL AND BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

1. Be on time to all rehearsals and performances. Remember: Early is on time, on time is late. Rehearsal will begin *three minutes* after the official start time of the class, allowing students time to unpack and go to their seats.
2. Warm up appropriately on the music Ms. Foster has assigned.
3. Participate in rehearsal in an active, engaged, and meaningful way and with a positive attitude.
4. Students should avoid the following in the band room: food, gum, candy, beverages other than water, cell phones, non-musical materials/other homework. Water in a closed bottle is permitted.
5. Students are expected to practice regularly and prepare individual parts outside of class. Weekly private lessons are strongly encouraged!
6. Students are expected to treat teachers, students, peers, and all musical instruments and equipment with care and respect. Put all materials away in their proper place.
7. When the director or other instructor steps on the podium or asks for your attention, all playing and talking stops.

8. Students must bring their instrument and all supplies necessary for class every single day. 7th and 8th grade students must bring their school chromebook for pass-offs or if asked to do so.

Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a 0% participation grade for the day.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

1. Sharpened pencil
2. Instrument (including 3+ reeds, accessories)
3. Music binder (including concert music, handouts, and book)

(Tuners and metronomes (or equivalent phone apps) are *strongly* recommended!)

Essential Elements is the required book for band and is included in the band fees. Many instrument supplies and accessories will be sold at the “Band Store” in the director’s office. Required supplies for each instrument are posted on the WHMS Band website. Failure to bring materials to class will result in a 0% for participation grade for the day.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Ms. Foster and other specialized instructors will assess, evaluate, and provide constructive and productive feedback for students regularly through a variety of methods. These will include, but are not limited to, written or electronic quizzes, written reflections, and playing assessments (“Pass-Offs.”)

GRADING POLICY

40%	Daily Participation/Demonstration of Rehearsal Skills
25%	Concerts/Tests
20%	Quizzes/Pass-Offs
15%	Classwork/Homework

Individual grades will be posted on Infinite Campus.

Participation will be tallied on a weekly basis from the total of all 5 days. (Example: if a student loses one day of daily participation, that will result in an 80% for the week.)

CONCERTS

CONCERT ATTENDANCE

The ONLY excused absences from concerts include:

1. Excused absence from school due to field trip or extracurricular activity (with at least 2 weeks advance notice, preferably more)
2. Illness (doctor's note required)
3. Family emergency (note from parent or guardian required)

Because of the collaborative nature of performances, scheduled concerts are required (not optional.) Students should note conflicts at the *beginning* of the school year and compare against athletic, extracurricular, and other scheduled activities. In cases where reconciling the conflict is challenging, students should contact the director *immediately*. She is always willing to speak with coaches/sponsors and find a compromise.

Students who miss a performance will receive a 0% for a Test/Concert grade. If the absence is excused, it can be made up individually with me through a pass-off of the music that would have been performed. Student must seek out the director to receive a make-up grade. If the absence is unexcused, the grade will remain a 0%. Students who are out of uniform receive a 50%. Students who are late receive an 80%. These grades may be adjusted slightly on an individual basis at the discretion of the director.

CONCERT ETIQUETTE

Concert Etiquette is an important skill for music students and families. It allows others to enjoy the music without distraction! We also record the concerts, so please help us get the best recording possible.

Please do the following at all concerts:

- Turn off phone, or set it to vibrate.
- Make sure the shutter sound and flash are off for any photos.
- Stay quiet so everyone can listen to each piece.
- Stay in your seat while the band is playing. If you need to leave, wait until the piece is over.
- Keep small children with you at all times, and take them outside if they need a break.
- Wait to clap until after the conductor lowers her hands. Silence is part of the

music!

- Attend the entire concert out of respect for the efforts and dedication of the students involved.

We deeply appreciate your attendance at our concerts! You, the audience, play such an important role at concerts. As we encourage our student performers to use proper concert etiquette, please remember how important it is for parents, friends, adults, and older siblings to model that behavior. Thank you for positively reinforcing appropriate concert etiquette so everyone may enjoy the performance.

UNIFORMS

Uniform for concerts/performances will be WHMS band polo (covered by band fees,) khaki pants, long black socks (that cover the ankle,) and all-black shoes. Please go ahead and begin to purchase these items before the first concert!

INSTRUMENTS

SCHOOL-OWNED INSTRUMENTS AND REPAIRS

Some school-owned instruments may be lent to students. Students are expected to maintain and clean instruments regularly. Nominal repair charges due to normal wear and tear will be covered by the \$30 rental fee. Loss or damage due to negligence of a West Hall-owned instrument is the responsibility of the student/family. Rental instruments are on a first come, first served basis.

Repairs of student-owned instruments are the responsibility of the student and family. Repairs of school-owned instruments are generally the responsibility of the school. The school does not cover repairs due to negligence, such as horseplay or failure to properly maintain an instrument.

If a student would like their instrument repaired by North Georgia Band Instrument Service, a trusted repair shop, they make frequent visits to the school. Students should leave their instrument with Ms. Foster with their name clearly marked and a note inside describing the damage/issue and contact info. Mr. Barr will give an estimate and get the parents' approval *before* doing any work on the instrument.

PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS

Percussionists are responsible for setup, tear-down, and appropriate care and storage of all percussion instruments. Percussionists may utilize school instruments at any time for practice before, during, or after school.

Percussion instruments are to be played or touched **only** by percussionists. Should a non-percussionist touch or move a percussion instrument, following a warning, disciplinary action will be pursued.

CHARMS

The West Hall Band Program utilizes an online database called Charms Office Assistant. This helps with communication, management, and organization of all things related to the West Hall Band Program. Charms not only keeps track of financial records, fundraising profits, and member information, it is also a tool for our student musicians. They can keep practice logs online, upload playing tests, and more. Student financial statements can be viewed at any time by all band families through Charms!

How do I login as a Parent/Student?

- Log on to www.charmsoffice.com and click "Parents/Students/Members Log in" in the upper right corner.
- Locate the "Parent/Student/Members Login" section of the web page. Login to your student's account using the school code: **WestHallMSBand**
- This will bring up the main "Public" page. This will allow you to look at the calendar for the West Hall Band including event list, and handouts and other "publicly shared" files, as well as a few other options.
- If this is your first time accessing Charms, you will need to enter your student's school ID number. Once you access Charms using the school ID, you can create another password. Remember to create a password that the whole family can remember, and write it down!
- If the student or parent has already accessed the Charms account, you will need to use the password initially created by the first person to login.
- If you forgot your password, there are mechanisms to recover/reset a lost username or password. Please email Ms. Foster.

How do I update my personal information?

- Click on "Update Info" (blue person logo)
- You can help make changes to adult and student information page (such as updating phone numbers and email addresses if they change) to help them communicate with you more effectively. You will also be able to indicate which parent volunteer/resource groups you would like to participate in. Click *Update Info* to save changes.

How can I make payments online through Charms?

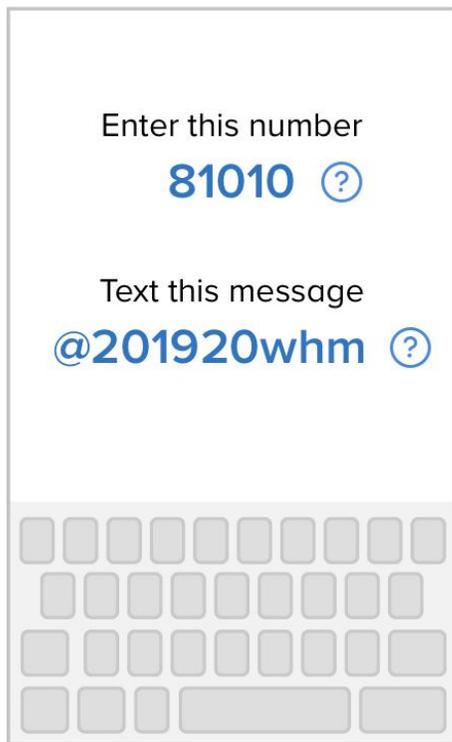
- This function is coming soon! When it is added, I will update the website and digital handbook.
 - *Note: There is an additional 3% fee for online transactions.*

How do I look at my student's financial statement?

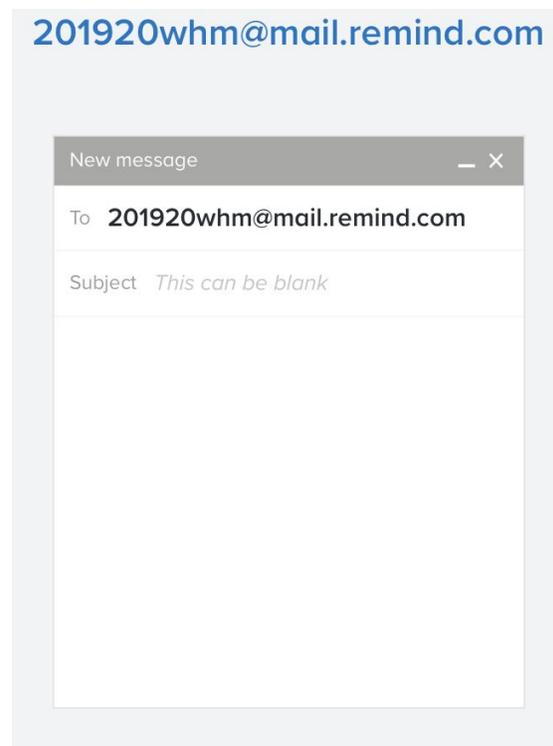
- This function is coming soon! When it is added, I will update the website and digital handbook.

JOIN REMIND

How to join our Remind group to stay up to date on all band updates:



OR



Please note that any students under 13 who join will be asked to provide a parent/guardian email address, which will also receive updates.

HELPFUL OPPORTUNITIES

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Here are a few things parents/guardians can do to help:

- Join the WHMS Band Association.
- If you ever have a question... just ask!
- Volunteer to chaperone field trips or help with events.
- Show an interest in the musical study of your child.
- Take personal instruments to the shop once a year for maintenance.
- Be extra-careful with instruments. Repair costs are high!
- Keep their case stocked with all accessories needed (Saxophones and clarinets need 3 or more reeds at a time.)
- Purchase a metronome and tuner. (Phone apps are perfectly fine.)
- Find a quiet place where your child can practice without interruption.
- Come up with a reward system for DAILY practice.
- Provide private lessons! Ms. Foster will help you find a great teacher.
- Make faithful attendance at all band activities.
- Stay current on your "fair share" of fundraisers and fees.
- Help your child remember to use their agenda for marking important dates.
- Teach your child to be prepared and on time to each rehearsal or lesson.
- Notify the director if your child will be absent for events or performances.
- Keep the Handbook in a safe place and refer to it often.
- Put the 2019-2020 Band Calendar on the fridge, or somewhere prominent.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Officers (music librarians, section leaders, equipment managers, and others as deemed necessary) may be chosen to serve in leadership capacities for the school year.

Student leaders will serve the program at the discretion of Ms. Foster. They may have extra responsibilities in and outside of class, such as morning meetings during RIGOR time.

PRIVATE LESSONS

Private lessons on a musical instrument are the best way to improve performance skills. The one-on-one approach allows the student to benefit from individual attention as opposed to a teacher monitoring a class of over forty. A recent survey of students in the S.C. All-State Band revealed that approximately 85% of the students in the band studied privately. Ms. Foster will be more than happy to assist

in the selection of a private teacher.

AUDITIONS AND HONOR BANDS

Members of the band program are eligible to audition for the All-State and All-District Honor Bands. 6th graders have an additional opportunity to attend First Year Honor Band with no audition and are nominated by their director. Being selected for these ensembles is an honor and participating will a memorable and musically rich experience. Please consult the schedule, and ask Ms. Foster for more information.

PEP BANDS

Here at West Hall, we like to show our support for all of our students through music. On a completely volunteer basis, 7th and 8th graders have the opportunity to learn some pop songs and play them at a few football and basketball games each year! We will know more specific dates once the county finalizes their athletic schedule, but generally, football games are Tuesday nights, and basketball games are Monday and Thursday nights. Students may also have opportunities to play at curriculum nights, pep rallies, or 5th grade visits. The uniform for any pep band activity is any West Hall spirit wear shirt and jeans.

FINANCES

In order to keep band accessible to all students, we expect every member to participate in fundraisers and contribute a band fee. Fundraising supports clinicians, instruments, music, and opportunities. Making small incremental payments is acceptable as long as the total band fee is paid off by **October 1st**. Fundraising goals are to be met by the end of the school year. Families in financial situations that make paying band fees an impossibility should speak to me directly. We will never turn a student away from band due to an inability to pay. Families who do not wish to participate in fundraisers are welcome to donate the \$100 fundraising expectation instead.

6TH GRADE BAND FEES

\$75 fee due by October 1, \$100+ fundraising

7TH AND 8TH GRADE BAND FEES

\$50 fee due by October 1, \$100+ fundraising

FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES

September 11 - Moon pie fundraiser, Goal 1 box each (\$25)

March - Taste of West Hall fundraiser - 8th grade only - Goal 10 tickets each (\$100)

January - Katydid candies - Goal TBD

November - T-shirt fundraiser - Goal 15 shirts each (\$105)

Rockathon in March 5-10pm - Goal \$50 each

2019-2020 BAND CALENDAR

The marching band calendar for participating 8th graders can be found on the band website. Grey events are not required for 6th graders.

Wednesday, August 14 @5-7pm - 7th and 8th Grade Band Family Meeting

Wednesday, August 21 @5-7pm - 6th Grade Band Family Meeting

Thursday, September 26 @4-5:30pm - WHHS MS Night Rehearsal

Friday, September 27 @5:30pm - WHHS Middle School Night and Parent Tailgate

Tuesday, October 29 @6:30pm - Fall Cluster Concert

Tuesday, December 17 @6:30pm - Holiday Concert

Tuesday, February 25, @6:30pm - Pre-LGPE Concert

Early March (TBA by District) - LGPE Field Trip

Saturday, March 14 @5-7pm - Taste of West Hall

Friday, March 20th @5-10pm - Rockathon

Saturday, March 28th all day - 8th Grade Field trip to Southern Star

Thursday, April 16 @6:30pm - Spring Concert

Tuesday, April 28th @6pm - Outdoor Recital Night for Chamber Ensembles

SIGNATURE AND CONTACT INFORMATION

We will use the following information to contact you in case of an emergency, and to send you important updates.

Student Name _____

Parent/Guardian Name(s) _____

Phone Number _____ Email _____

Check this box if you do not have a phone number.

Check this box if you do not have an email address.

Parent Signature

I, _____, certify that I have seen the information in the 2019-2020 band syllabus and the 2019-2020 band calendar.

Signature

Date

Student Signature

I, _____, certify that I have seen the information in the 2019-2020 band syllabus and the 2019-2020 band calendar.

Signature

Date

Class Period