



We're delighted you've joined the West Potomac Marching Wolverine family! Our marching band season starts with August band camp, and by September – with rehearsals, football games, competitions and fundraisers – new families can feel a bit overwhelmed. We'd like to help you ease in so that it all feels fun instead.

How to Survive Marching Band Season

1) Get Into The Loop!

- Make a habit of checking out the band's website, www.wolverineband.com. It's your go-to source for updates, times and places, forms, and background information. Not sure what time your kid's due at practice? Check the website. Not sure where the next competition is? Check the website. Want to complain that the website's missing something? Check the website for the booster president's email address!
- Look for weekly emails from the band booster club that'll highlight upcoming events, note deadlines of various kinds, list volunteer opportunities (i.e., pleas for help), etc.
- Read the *Rookie Survival Guide* written for students, found on the band's website. It'll give your child (and you) a sense of what to expect from band camp and beyond.
- Come to band booster meetings! They're typically held on the second Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. Dropping by is a great way to get familiar with faces and to get a sense of what's going on.

2) Mark Your Calendar Now!

- Click here www.wolverineband.com for the calendar that shows all of the rehearsal times, game dates, competition dates, and more. There's a printable document you can download as well as an on-line version.
- Be sure to get those dates onto your family calendar early so you can work around them. Marching band season is busy. That's part of the fun, and part of the reason all of the kids and families get to know each other so well. (Keep in mind that it's also short,

so come the second week in November you'll suddenly have your weekends and your child back!)

3) Pitch In!

- Marching band is a complex operation, and it takes an enormous amount of parent participation to work. We could not function without the hundreds of hours that parents contribute. Does that make you nervous? We hope not. The truth is that the more you jump in, the more fun you'll have. Band is a fantastic window into your child's world. Volunteering is a great way to get to know the kids your child's hanging out with, and their families. It helps make a school as big as West Potomac feel like home.

- **It'll take an average of 10 hours of service from every family to keep things going.**

Perhaps you'll take a few shifts at the concessions stand, maybe help supervise at a car wash, drive a team around on Tag Day, or chaperone a competition. There are also ways to help from home. You could do a few loads of laundry when uniforms get muddy, bring in a dish for a pot luck, or work on senior recognition in the spring.

- Take a moment to look here www.wolverineband.com through all of the different ways you can pitch in. There's something for everyone.

MARCHING BAND FAQ's

When Is Band Practice?

Once school starts rehearsals are typically three days a week, generally Tuesdays and Thursdays after school until 3:30 – 6 p.m., and Wednesdays from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. This schedule lasts until the last week of October.

Keep in mind that as far as the marching band is concerned, "Early is on time, and on time is LATE."

Along the same lines, when practice "ends" at 8:30 p.m. that means the band stops working at that time. Then they walk back from the field, go into the band room, put away their instruments...

Typically you'll be driving out of the parking lot 15+ minutes after practice "ends."

When Are Football Games?

The band performs at each home varsity football game. This year there will be five home games: Sept. 2, Sept. 24, October 1, October 8, October 29.

The band is usually due at school around 6:00 p.m. on those nights. The kids will sit with the band and play pep songs in the stands throughout the game, they'll march the show at halftime, and they'll stay until the end of the game, which is typically about 10:00 p.m.

Band parents often sit in the section next to the band. That way they can enjoy the music throughout the game, and watch the halftime show from that center section which gives the best view. And when they're not seated, band parents are helping with the Pit Crew, handing out plumes for the half-time show, or pitching in the concessions stand,

which is the band's biggest fundraiser! J We do need every family to cover a few two-hour concessions shifts over the season. (Get more info, and sign up here: www.wolverineband.com) And feel free to swing by on nights you haven't officially volunteered and offer to help if they're short-handed. Don't worry – they'll teach you what to do!

What About Band Competitions?

There are typically three or four fall Saturdays devoted to marching band competitions. The schedule is TENTATIVE until after band camp, but this year's unconfirmed competition dates are: Sept. 18, Oct. 2, Oct. 16, Oct. 23, and Nov. 6.

On those Saturdays the entire band comes in to warm up and go through the show a few times before then loading onto buses to head to the competition, which could be anywhere from twenty minutes to two hours away.

Competitions are only possible with parents pitching in! The Pit Crew is a dedicated team of parents who help load, unload and move the percussion equipment. Other parents help out with uniforms right before departure and upon return, and still others chaperone on the bus. Please take a look at the volunteer page on the website (www.wolverineband.com) and find which spot suits you best.

On weekends when parents are not signed up to help, they can just drive themselves and have fun watching all of the bands and CHEERING. (It's more fun to perform for a warm crowd.)

What About Uniforms?

During band camp, each child will be fitted for a band uniform that will become theirs for the season.

There will be black bibbers (pants), a jacket, a hat, gloves, and shoes. They'll typically keep everything except the shoes at school. (We don't have room to store the shoes.) They'll also get this year's t-shirt at band camp, which is what they wear under their jacket. It's theirs to keep.

How Do We Turn Forms In?

Throughout the entire band year, there will be times you'll need to fill out permission slips and other forms, and your child will always return those to the blue box in the band room.

What If We Have Questions?

Whenever kids have a question, we encourage them to turn to their section leader. The captains and drum majors may also be able to help. The band booster club has a list here www.wolverineband.com of who handles what, so you'll know how to direct your question.

What Are "Points" For?

There are many aspects to band – many opportunities to audition, to perform, to pitch in with fundraisers, to help others and to learn. The kids who deepen their experience with

the most extra activities earn anything from a varsity letter to the “honor bandsman” award.

Is There An Easy Way for Me To Support Band?

Why, yes, thanks for asking!

It would make a HUGE difference if every band family took five minutes to register for our online shopping programs like Amazon Smile so that a percentage all of these purchases would go to our band! PLEASE click this link www.wolverineband.com and get registered so that we don't lose out on free money!

Is There An Even Easier Way for Me To Support Band?

Why, yes, thanks for asking!

You can skip the middlemen and just write a tax-deductible check to the West Potomac Band Patrons Organization (WPBPO), which is a 501c3 organization. There are many worthwhile causes to support with your charitable donations, of course. We hope you'll consider creating a top-notch experience for the young musicians in our own community one of them!