



WELCOME! We are excited that you're joining the West Potomac Marching Wolverines! The rumors are true: marching band IS a big commitment! But it's worth it. Come November, you're going to be proud to be in such a great band, and happy to be surrounded by new friends.

Band Camp

It all starts with band camp in August. That's where the band learns the show so that it'll be ready to perform at the first home game of the season.

Is it hard work? YES!

Is it hot? YES!

Does it end up being rewarding and surprisingly fun? ABSOLUTELY!!!

Freshmen and any other new students have two orientation days: August 5-6, from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. On those days you'll meet your student section leaders, captains and drum majors, and they'll work with you on marching basics so that you can hit the ground running with the rest of the band the following week.

The entire band comes together for full band camp August 9 - 14 at Sandburg this year this year and 16 - 18 from 12:00 - 9:00 p.m. Those days are generally split up so that sometimes you'll work inside on music within your section (say, clarinets), other times within your larger group (say, woodwinds), and the rest of the time everybody comes together to work on learning the show, which either happens on the very back parking lot or on the field.

What should I bring?

1. Water bottle(s) It's important to stay hydrated. There is no drinking fountain outside where we practice so bring a water bottle or two. (Stick with water because caffeine and sugar-loaded drinks will dehydrate you.) You will sweat during marching band! We're outside a lot and it's hot on the pavement in the sun.

2. Comfortable clothes Dress comfortably. It will be hot, and you'll be moving around a lot.

SHIRTS: Light-colored t-shirts are a great choice. No bikini tops. SHORTS: Comfy gym or board shorts are perfect. SHOES: Comfortable sneakers with socks are the best choice. No sandals, flip-flops or crocs.

3. Your instrument Even if you think you're just working on marching, always bring your instrument.

4. Dinner and healthy snacks Pack a dinner and some quick snacks like a banana or an energy bar. And be sure to eat a nice, healthy lunch before you come to camp. Marching is hard work and your body needs fuel. One or two evenings each week you might be able to buy a special concession dinner from the Band Boosters. On Saturday, August 14 the Band Boosters will provide pizza for all at no cost.

5. Sunglasses

6. Hat

7. Sunscreen

8. Bug spray

9. Chapstick Can be especially helpful for brass and woodwind players.

10. Pencils. You'll need to mark up your music and your "drill" cards (that's what tells you where to go on the field) with instructions and changes.

What should I expect?

- Expect to work really hard.
- Expect to be sore and tired.
- Expect to learn more in a few weeks of band camp than you have in the last two years of middle school.
- Expect the staff and student leaders to provide a nurturing environment for you.
- Expect to suddenly feel very much a part of your school!

What's expected of me?

A productive band camp is critical to a great season. One band camp day is the equivalent of a week's worth of rehearsals during the year. Do your part to make the most of it, and bring your best self. That means:

- **Show Up.** Marching band is the ultimate team endeavor. If even one person is missing, it can throw off the whole band, which wastes everyone's time.
- **Be On Time.** You'll hear this over and over: ***"If you are early, you're on time. If you are on time, you are late."*** If practice starts at 12:00, that doesn't mean arriving at the parking lot at 12:00. Give yourself 15 minutes to settle in, gather your things, unpack your instrument, and get where you need to be so you're ready to WORK at 12:00.
- **Show Respect.** Listen, get in line, stay in step, and do what is asked of you. Play your part in getting things done quickly. The less time we waste, the better our show will be. And it feels really, really good to have a great show.
- **Keep Cool!** Both physically and mentally. Can't hit the line the first time you try it? Keep trying, and listen to advice. Marching is hard! You'll get it eventually. You'll be amazed at how much you learn at band camp. By August 23, you'll have gone from having no idea what's involved to being able to march and play an entire show.

Plus, you'll feel like you've gone to school at West Po forever, and the hallways will be full of friendly faces on your very first day of school.

Fall Marching Band Season

How Do I Stay On Top Of All This Stuff?

We have rehearsals at least three times a week once school starts, home football games where we perform, competitions on some weekends, plus Tag Day (Aug. 28 – info here: <http://www.wolverineband.com>). It's a busy time, and there's a lot to keep track of. Two things will help you:

- **Use the Website.** Learn to check the band website at www.wolverineband.com. If you have a question about where to be and when, chances are the answer is going to be right on the home page. In addition, your family will get regular email updates, there's a band Facebook page, and the drum majors tweet out last-minute instructions. But think website first.
- **Manage Your Time Wisely.** The busy fall marching season will hone your time management skills! You'll learn that you'll have to prioritize, plan ahead, and use every minute of your day wisely. There's nothing wrong with doing homework on the bus on the way to a competition!

When Is Band Practice?

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

When Are Football Games?

The band performs at each home varsity football game. This year there will be five home games: Aug. 27, Sept. 2 (Thursday), Sept. 24, October 8, October 29.

The band is usually due at school around 6pm on those nights. You'll sit with the band and play pep songs in the stands throughout the game, you'll march the show at halftime, and you'll stay until the end of the game, which is typically about 10pm.

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, 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.

When Do I Get A Uniform?

During band camp, you'll be fitted for a band uniform that will become yours for the season. There will be black pants and white pants, a jacket, a hat, gloves, and shoes. You'll typically keep everything except the shoes at school. (We don't have room to store the shoes.) You'll also get this year's t-shirt at band camp, which is what you wear under your jacket. That's yours to keep.

Where Do I Turn Forms In?

Throughout the entire band year, there will be times you'll need to fill out permission slips and other forms, and you'll always return those to the blue box in the band room. All forms you'll ever need to bring in will be on the home page of the website if you need them.

Who Is Mrs. Bauer?

She is Mr. Rice's assistant, sits in the office next to the band room.

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. For more information, look for the *Band Awards Service Log* form on the home page of the website.

Who Can Help Me If I Have Questions?

Whenever you have a question you can turn to your section leader. The captains and drum majors will also be able to help you.