



**WESTFIELD**

BLUE DEVIL BANDS

## How to be a **SUCCESSFUL** WHSMB Parent

Along with the experience of being a band member, parents can become part of the experience too! Here are some ways you can become part of your son/daughter's rewarding experience in the WHSMB.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Communication is the key to the successful operation of a large organization. Each Sunday during the season a "Weekly Update" email will go out with important information including rehearsal and performance times, dates, any changes to the schedule, current fundraisers, and other various reminders related to the season. This update will contain a detailed schedule for the current week as well as the following week. Please be sure to read the updates carefully. They are designed to answer your questions BEFORE you ask them. Also, be sure to stay in communication with the directors about conflicts - this should be done WELL in advance. Often times we can work with you to minimize the amount of rehearsal students are missing. When students miss rehearsal they miss information for themselves and can sometimes slow down the learning process for the rest of the group when we have to get them caught up upon return. Communicating conflicts ahead of time allows the directors and staff an opportunity to develop a plan that works for the students and, most importantly, the band to make sure we're being as efficient as possible in rehearsal. While we do support teaching our students how to be independent and self-sufficient, they still need some guidance from the adults on how to develop important skills like time management and effective communication. We work EXTREMELY hard to have good communication on our end. Please help us in reciprocating that effort on your end.

### **VOLUNTEERING**

Our program can't run without the help of many, many, many volunteers. Please make every attempt to donate time, items, services, or all of the above.

- *Time:* We need chaperones for games, competitions, and band camp. We need volunteers to assist in the loading and unloading of props and equipment. We need volunteers to assist in the feeding of the students at various events! We need volunteers to assist in providing water for our students at performances. We need volunteers to organize and run fundraisers so we can meet our fundraising goals to fund the marching band season.
- *Items:* we need many food and drink items donated throughout the season. Our students like to eat!
- *Service:* Examples of service opportunities are uniform/costume fitting and maintenance, prop building, etc.

**In 2018 we are challenging all parents to try to find time to volunteer for ONE EVENT. It does take a village to make this big machine of an organization work and we need everyone's help so we don't burn out a few parents who may do all of the work. On any given weekend we travel with over 150 people - students, staff, and volunteers. That doesn't happen without a team of people working behind the scenes to make sure every detail is taken care of enabling our students to be SUCCESSFUL, which is always the goal!**

### **FUNDARISING**

To operate our organization costs a lot of money, and for the most part we are self-sustaining and raise the money ourselves. We have student-account fundraisers, which directly subsidize your own personal band-related expenses. We also have general fundraisers, which raise money for program costs that benefit the entire group. While some families may choose to pay out of pocket rather than participating in the student account fundraisers, it is requested that every band family participate in the general band fundraisers. On any given year marching band can cost over \$150,000. Only about half of that is covered through our member financial commitment. The School District does support the marching band financially, which helps. We still fall about \$20-30,000 short each year, which is a task for our Band Parent Association. They organize fundraisers to support the amazing experience provided to our students through participation in marching band. In order to make this happen we need EVERYONE'S help!

## SUPPORT

In addition to volunteering, there are many other things you can do to support your band student as they learn many important life lessons through participation in band. Understand how the band operates and the importance of your child's role within the band and support them as such.

- *Time Management:* One of the most important things that marching band teaches young men and women is time management. Have conversations with your children often about how to balance academics and marching band so they can be successful and fully committed to both. Remind them about the dangers of procrastination. If academics suffer because of marching band, a student's transcript can see long-lasting effects. If a student's marching band commitment suffers because his/her schoolwork starts suffering, we are all affected. Students and parents often note that grades are actually BETTER during the marching band season because students are forced to manage their time. This is a valuable skill that students MUST learn to be successful in life after WHS.
- *Schedule:* Please help your student fulfill his/her commitment to marching band by planning your family's schedule around rehearsals and performances as much as possible. This includes doctor's appointments, family vacations, etc. We don't have a 2<sup>nd</sup> string or a bench. Everyone participates all of the time and we rely on everyone being present so we can improve.
- *Nutrition:* Be sure your son/daughter is taking care of his/her body during the marching band season. Greasy or salty foods should be avoided, as should soda. Hydrate often.
- *Sleep:* Encourage your marching band student to get plenty of rest so their body can keep up with the demand of marching band. This is a very physical activity!
- *Discipline:* Perhaps the most important thing that marching band teaches is discipline. We strive to maintain a professional and disciplined appearance, both on and off the field. When with the band, students lose their individuality and become a team. All decisions they make should be guided by this principle.
- *Audience:* Be a supportive audience member and come to as many performances as you can! Wear WHS spirit-wear so our presence is known. No WHS parent or student should ever make judgmental or negative comments about another school or group at a performance. As we tell the students - "Someone is always watching and listening." Such comments reflect negatively on the organization as a whole. It is certainly appropriate to applaud and cheer in a performance when you see or hear something you like. In fact, the band performs better when they have a receptive and supportive audience. **Many times, the effect on the audience and the judges can be enhanced by the crowd's response.**
  - During a competition or event, the students are under the direction of the director, staff, and chaperones. Parents are asked not to enter student areas, join in on band meetings, or pull their student aside or away from the band at any time unless approved by a director in advance. This is for safety and liability as well as to ensure that students are able to focus on their responsibilities with the band.
- *Philosophy on winning:* Winning and beating others aren't goals for the WHS Band. Our goal is for each member to continue to improve from performance to performance and for the program to achieve certain short-term and long-term goals as determined by the staff. We should celebrate a great performance immediately after it happens, and that won't be affected in the awards ceremony by whether or not we beat another group. Contrarily, if our performance wasn't to our standard, we will reflect on what we can do to improve for future performances, and that won't be affected by whether or not we beat another group. Parents are asked not to discuss rankings or placement with other parents especially with the students. The staff will talk to the students about scores and placement as we see fit. This activity is very subjective in the way it is evaluated. Unlike competitive sports, we do not have ANY control over our competitor's performances. For that reason, we focus on the one thing we DO have control over - OUR OWN PERFORMANCE. If students and parents remain focused on these values related to competition it will ensure a meaningful and positive experience for everyone involved. THAT is always our number one priority. Winning can be fun, and when those opportunities arise we will celebrate, but it is NOT the reason why we perform and create music.