

# Westborough High School Band

Parents and guardians:

Welcome to one of the most exciting experiences in which you and your student can be a part-THE BAND! As a member of this wonderful organization, your student will develop his/her musicianship, but I believe that he/she will be able to glean so much more. Participation in a group of this size requires excellent time management, cooperation, and communication from all members. Those are among the many skills that students will find useful well after they've played their last note.

We are in a strange moment in our history, and with it come challenges. There are going to be limitations throughout the year that will ebb and flow with the situation as we continue to work together to make the best of the time we are given. I am confident that we will be able to have meaningful musical experiences, though they may not always look the same as those to which we are accustomed. The most important elements of musicianship, camaraderie, and fun will still be present in whatever we are able to do.

Please take time to read through this handbook with your student. At the end, you will find a link to a Google Form acknowledging that you have received and read this handbook. Please be sure to complete that form by Wednesday, September 6. If you would prefer a paper version of this form, contact me and one will be provided.

With Pride,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Doyle', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Evan Doyle

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The health and safety of our students is always of greatest consideration and is in the spotlight now more than ever. Please know that we are following all of the best practices based on guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the Westborough Board of Health, and our district's health and safety plan. These are guidelines that may change throughout the year, and the WHS Fine Arts department is actively monitoring these guidelines.

[Click here to access the WPS Health and Safety Plan](#), revised 8/11/2020

## **Educational Philosophy**

I believe music is an essential part of the core curriculum. The art of making music allows students to explore their aesthetic development through a process that engages their bodies and minds. In band, the concert ensembles are at the core of the organization and other ensembles are an extension of that. In order for the program to thrive, the core must be strong. With that in mind, our concert ensembles should strive to perform music of artistic merit in a manner that displays their developing sense of musicianship.

In addition to the artistic merits, it is worth noting that participation in the arts, and particularly band, also allows students opportunities to develop skills applicable to their future lives, regardless of their career path. These skills include leadership, time management, collaboration, and problem solving. The way I ask my students to approach their band demands that they call on these skills on a daily basis.

Because I believe in the value of my subject, I will strive to bring energy and enthusiasm to my classroom. I will foster connections with my students based on a genuine interest in their development as musicians and as people so that their band room feel like a place they can be comfortable exploring their musical curiosity. Students will learn to value the contributions of other musicians while also pushing their own limits of personal expression.

## **Mission Statement**

**THE WESTBOROUGH HIGH SCHOOL BAND CREATES AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE STUDENTS EXPAND THEIR MUSICAL POTENTIAL AND ENRICH THEIR LIVES THROUGH MUSIC. BY FOSTERING A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY OF DIVERSE LEARNERS, WE PERFORM QUALITY REPERTOIRE AT A HIGH LEVEL.**

*2019-2020 Band Leadership Team*

## PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

*Note that all extracurricular activities are subject to the guidelines set forth by DESE and the Westborough Board of Health and will be informed by our district health and safety plan.*

**SYMPHONIC BAND:** The Symphonic Band is the principal concert ensemble. Membership in the wind ensemble is by audition. This organization performs several concerts a year, including the MICCA Concert Festival. Students in this ensemble will perform music from the grade 4 and 5 lists. This constitutes some of the most challenging music available for public school bands. *Symphonic Band students are strongly encouraged to participate in the district/all-state audition process.* Members of the Symphonic Band are selected by competitive audition. The instrumentation of the Symphonic Band is pre-set, and once that instrumentation is filled, no additional members are accepted. Members of the Concert Band will replace Symphonic Band members who do not maintain a consistently high level of musicianship and professionalism in rehearsal.

Regularly scheduled sectionals will be a part of this class and students will be expected to maintain the highest standards of performance, effort, and discipline.

**CONCERT BAND:** The Concert Band is the second group in our band program. This organization performs several concerts a year, including the MICCA Concert Festival. Students in this ensemble will perform music from the grades 3 and 4 lists. Symphonic Band students are encouraged to participate in all-region band tryouts.

Sectionals will be called as needed and are a necessary part of this class and students will be expected to maintain the highest standards of performance, effort, and discipline.

**MARCHING BAND:** Meeting primarily in the fall during football season, the Marching Band requires extra rehearsals, summer rehearsals, and some weekend time from September through November. Members must be enrolled in either Symphonic Band or Concert Band, but membership in Marching Band is not required for those courses.

*Please note that due to the coronavirus adjustments to our calendar, the Ranger Marching Band is most likely to meet and perform between February and April to align with the football schedule. More information will be forthcoming as it becomes available.*

JAZZ BAND: There are two jazz bands at Westborough High School. Membership to these groups is by audition and there are a fixed number of spots available in the ensembles. Students wishing to participate on trumpet, trombone, saxophone or drums in either Jazz Band must also be a member of Symphonic Band or Concert Band. Musicians wishing to join either group on guitar, piano, or string bass do not need to be a member of Symphonic Band or Concert Band, though members of those groups are also welcome to audition.

Jazz Band auditions will be held during the fall and rehearsals will be scheduled outside of the school day at a time to be determined. All rehearsals and performances are required and a failure to meet those requirements might result in dismissal from the ensemble.

CHAMBER ENSEMBLES: Throughout the school year, select students will be invited to perform in our honors chamber groups. These smaller groups require more accountability for part mastery since there is often only one student performing that part. These ensembles provide our students an opportunity for tremendous growth.

Rehearsal and performance opportunities for chamber ensembles will be determined based on interest, and the Westborough Public Schools calendar. Students who have previously performed in chamber ensembles will retain their seats. As new spots become available, they will be filled by audition.

### **BAND LEADERSHIP**

In order for our group to run at an optimum level, student leaders will be selected to serve as officers in the band program. This is an additional level of responsibility and students are selected based on their displayed dedication to the program and an interview process conducted near the end of the school year. Positions are a year-long appointment. Students interested in continuing to serve as officers must reapply for the following year. There will also be required leadership training for these positions. Scheduling for these events is on an as-needed basis and information will be distributed as soon as it is available.

### **FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS**

Students participating in the extra-curricular ensembles offered by the Westborough High School Band program will be required to pay an activity fee. The ensembles currently subject to the activity fee are Marching Band, Festival Jazz Band, and Repertoire Jazz Band. The activity fee is \$200 per activity with a \$500 family cap. The invoices and payment are all handled through the Westborough Public Schools District Billing Office. The District Billing Office is able to waive this fee in the event of financial hardship.

## **PRIVATE LESSONS**

Students wishing to maximize their potential for success as a band member should strongly consider enrolling in private lessons. The benefits gained by one-on-one instruction with a highly qualified instructor will pay tremendous dividends. Students will be given contact information for lesson teachers approved by the WPS band staff. For further information on private lessons, please contact Mr. Doyle.

## **AUDITION INFORMATION**

Several of our ensembles require students to audition. Judging panels will consist of Westborough Public Schools music staff and/or trusted professional musicians. Scores will be tabulated and the top scoring students will win the audition. SENIORITY IS NOT A FACTOR IN AUDITIONS.

Audition procedures will be fully explained to students before the auditions begin. Failure to follow appropriate audition protocol will result in disciplinary action at the discretion of Mr. Doyle.

## **SUPPLIES**

In addition to their instrument, music, and a pencil, the following items are required at EVERY band rehearsal:

- BRASS: valve oil or slide grease, necessary mutes, Berp buzz attachment
- WOODWINDS: 4 working reeds, swab, flutes need their tuning rod
- PERCUSSION: Percussion students are expected to bring the following sticks and mallets in their stick bag (another brand of comparable quality to the parenthesized Vic Firth offering is acceptable): Snare Sticks (Vic Firth SD1), 2 pairs Medium Yarn Mallets (Vic Firth M134), General Timpani Mallets (Vic Firth T1 or Mike Balter T3), Rubber Xylophone Mallets (Musser M4)

## GRADING POLICY

Grades will be based on a combination of daily participation and preparation along with appropriate assessments of each student's growth as a musician. Some assessments will be standard based, meaning they will be asked to meet a specific goal and will be assessed on how well they achieve that. Other standards will be more individualized. These goals will fall under one or more of the following categories: instrumental performance, rehearsal skills, music theory, and musical understanding and communication.

**30%: *individual performance based assessments***

**30% *varied assessments***

**40%: *classroom etiquette***

## BYOD

The Westborough High School Bands will make use of technology and students are expected to have their devices available and charged for those class sessions where their use is appropriate. While we will not use the technology every day, the devices will be used throughout the school year. For Symphonic Band, students should also have headphones available, as much of our work will require them to listen independently to music.

## DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

In the event that a student experiences difficulty functioning in a manner appropriate for participation, action will be taken to help remedy the situation. The following are some of the ways behavior issues will be handled. The list is ordered from acts appropriate from slight transgressions through more major or persistent infractions. This is not a checklist and not necessarily the only course of action. Situations will be handled on an individual basis at the discretion of Mr. Doyle and the Westborough High School administration.

- A verbal reminder/request to correct behavior
- A discussion with Mr. Doyle regarding issues and corrective actions at the conclusion of class
- Removal from rehearsal. Student may be given an alternate assignment.
- Mr. Doyle contacts parents/guardians to alert them of the situation
- Conference with student, parents, and Mr. Doyle
- WHS Administration may become involved in the process
- A conference between student, parents, Mr. Doyle, and an administrator
- Removal from extracurricular activities associated with the WHS Band Program

## ATTENDANCE

Later in the year, each band might present public performances. Should this become a possibility, we will adhere to past practice for performance participation. Each performance is very important and attendance by the members of the band is required. Band members are expected to attend all rehearsals and performances. Attendance will be taken at every rehearsal and performance.

The following reasons for missing a performance/rehearsal will be considered EXCUSED:

1. Severe illness, which must be attested to by a physician
2. Death in the family
3. Observation of a religious holiday
4. A wedding in the immediate family
5. Participation in a school-sponsored activity approved by Mr. Doyle in advance

Examples of UNEXCUSED absences and tardies include, but are not limited to:

1. Work
2. Transportation not arranged
3. Too much homework
4. Anything deemed unexcused by Mr. Doyle and the Westborough High School administration

An unexcused absence may result in disciplinary action. Repeated unexcused absences from rehearsals and/or performances will cause the student to be dismissed from the program. Students with an unexcused absence will not be offered an alternative make-up assignment

The band is dependent upon all of its members. Unlike many other classes where individuals are accountable only for their own success or failure, a band student's success is dependent on the full participation of all the members. The following rehearsal guidelines have been established so that each band member can fully understand what is expected of him/her.

1. Be present for all rehearsals and performances.
2. Be on time – in your designated place when the rehearsal begins.
3. Have all required materials and equipment at each rehearsal or performance.
4. Do not talk or distract others during rehearsal.
5. Follow directions of instructors as well as all school policies.

## PRACTICE

Students are expected to practice for a minimum of 15-20 minutes four or five days a week. These practice sessions do not need to be steady blocks. Two ten minute sessions of well organized practice can be just as effective, or even more so than 20 minutes solid. There are practice rooms available for student use before and after school.



## UNIFORMS

MARCHING BAND: Band uniforms are the property of the school and will be issued individually. Any damage due to mistreatment or poor care of the uniforms will be the responsibility of the student and parents. The individual cost of a uniform is in excess of \$500. Uniforms will be cleaned on a systematic basis. Uniforms are fitted as closely as possible to each student. The uniform must NOT be cut!

Band students must purchase a pair of BLACK marching shoes. The shoes our band uses are Drill Masters. In addition, students must also purchase black gloves, black socks, and a black band t-shirt. These items will be ordered during summer rehearsals in August.

It is the student's responsibility to take care of the uniform. This includes hanging the uniform in an appropriate manner, so as to minimize wrinkles. Gloves and t-shirt should be washed each week and shoes should be kept clean.

CONCERT/JAZZ ENSEMBLES: For other ensembles, students are responsible for providing elements of their own. Clothing should be clean and free of wrinkles and should fall within the guidelines provided. Failure to meet our dress requirements will result in students being asked to find appropriate attire.

Gentleman: black slacks, black calf length socks, black shoes and black belt, white long-sleeved, button-down shirt and a tie of their choosing. A black coat will be provided.

Ladies: black full-length pants or a longer-than-knee-length black skirt with a white blouse, black shoes (heels 2 inches or less, no sandals, no flip-flops)

## INSTRUMENTS

PERSONAL INSTRUMENTS: Instruments must be kept in good playing condition at all times. Up-keep is an individual responsibility! In the event of financial hardship, the school district is able to offer assistance toward the rental of an instrument typically not provided by the district. The following music store is recommended for repairs:

French Music Company: 53 Otis Street, (508) 366-5994

SCHOOL OWNED INSTRUMENTS: School owned instruments are the responsibility of the student to whom they are checked out. All school instruments are repaired before being checked out to a student. Any repairs that are necessary during the time an instrument is checked out are the responsibility of the student. The student must notify the band staff if a repair needs to be made.

## **HAZING/HARASSMENT**

There is absolutely no room for hazing or harassment of any kind in the WHS Band. Any allegations of this sort of behavior will be investigated and reported to the administration of Westborough High School. Students found to have engaged in hazing or harassment of other students will be subject to discipline in accordance with Westborough Public Schools policy.

## **IN CLOSING**

This handbook is intended as a guideline to the expectations set forth for members of the Westborough High School Band. There will be occasions when issues may arise that are not covered in this handbook. In those circumstances, the course of action will be determined at the discretion of the Director of Bands and decisions will be determined in accordance with the policies of Westborough Public Schools.

And finally, I leave you with some words from some very smart people:

“Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything.”

— Plato

“Music can change the world because it can change people.”

— Bono

"Ability may get you to the top, but it takes character to keep you there."

— John Wooden

**[Please click here to access and complete the handbook acknowledgement form.](#)**