

# Band Parents 101

## Cheat Sheet

Welcome to the West Milford Band Parent Association Family!!

Attending your first Band Parent meeting can be overwhelming. This is normal. You will catch on quick, so don't stress about it. Have fun, join a committee, get involved, and ask questions.

The information you need is not all in one place. This can be a bit confusing until you get familiar with where to look for what you need.

Your student is not going to tell you everything you need to know. You will be lucky if they tell you anything about what is going on.

### **New Band Parent Homework Assignment:**

1. There is a **Google calendar** on the band parent's website ([www.wmhighlanderband.com](http://www.wmhighlanderband.com)). Subscribe to it and add it to your phone. You will then have the latest schedule of events, which is updated promptly as new information becomes available. The band website has lots of other great information.
2. **Facebook** is a primary means of communication for the WMBPA. Sign up for our group, and you will be able to stay informed. Look for us under West Milford Highlander Band Parents Association.
3. Sign up for **Remind**. (Download Remind App, create an account and use class: @fd2gb7 ) Dr McLaughlin will supply all the details of an upcoming event (Where to be, when to be there, what to bring, how to dress, etc.). This is an absolute must for marching band and Disney Trip information!!!
4. OK now it's time to read through **the Band Parents 101 document**. It has some additional details for the above items, and addresses other things you will need to know about uniforms, and about the various events your student will be involved

in. Typically, 90% of the questions posted on Facebook are answered in the Band Parents 101 document.

Hopefully this gets you off to a good start!

Annette O'Mahoney

WMBPA President

[AnnetteOMahoney@gmail.com](mailto:AnnetteOMahoney@gmail.com)

## Band Parents 101

Welcome to the most active parent group at West Milford High School! We're delighted you are here! Your student has chosen an incredible high school experience by joining the most decorated and awarded group in West Milford. The "band" experience is second to none. Over the next few years parents and students alike will experience personal growth, enjoy enormous creativity, and enrich their high school experience beyond measure. The band program shapes them into a very special tight knit family!

To help with the transition into the band for the parents as well as first year students, we have developed this parent handbook. Our goal is to introduce you to the exciting world of band to successfully launch you and your student into the marching season and beyond. The West Milford Band Parent Association (WMBPA) is comprised of a large supportive, highly active, and super fun volunteering group. Parent involvement is the backbone of our operation. The WMBPA supports all band students. Be active in the WMBPA! It's a great way to stay connected with your children as they move through their high school years!

To get your feet wet, enclosed are guidelines and information along with contacts to ask any question you may have. Consider investing a little time to familiarize yourself with our amazing band program. We truly hope you enjoy this experience as your student grows both personally and musically!

**Band Mantra: Early is on time; On time is late; Late is inexcusable!**

**THE BEST PLACES TO GET INFORMATION ABOUT THE BAND PARENTS AND BAND ARE FROM THESE SOURCES:**

### **Band Website: [www.wmhighlanderband.com](http://www.wmhighlanderband.com)**

Everything is on the website. Please add it to your favorites and check it often. Our newsletter, music, schedules, photos, links, fundraising, uniform information, history, bylaws, contacts, and much more are on here. The site is updated frequently and full of information!

### **Remind App**

Dr. McLaughlin uses this to keep parents and students current on schedule changes, report times, which pieces of the uniform are to be worn, etc. You should download the app, create an account, join a class, and enter @fd2gb7. This is strongly recommended – you will get information immediately as it is posted.

## Facebook

Join us on Facebook at: **West Milford Highlander Band Parents Association**

Even if you are not a Facebook user, consider joining if only to join this group. Our group page will have up-to-the minute conversations and posts. It's also a great place to see videos of performances! Feel free to have your family join the group as well.

## West Milford Township Public Schools Website: [www.wmtps.org](http://www.wmtps.org)

The township school website will provide information about the *free* annual physicals and provide access to the necessary forms.

### 2022-2023 Executive Board Officers

President – Annette O'Mahoney - [annetteomahoney@gmail.com](mailto:annetteomahoney@gmail.com)

Vice President – Mary Duffy – [MaryDuffy625@gmail.com](mailto:MaryDuffy625@gmail.com)

Treasurer- Shawn Rubenacker - [srubenacker01@gmail.com](mailto:srubenacker01@gmail.com)

Corresponding Secretary – Jessica Redner - [ldybg3@msn.com](mailto:ldybg3@msn.com)

Recording Secretary – Jackie Scalia - [jackiescalia@gmail.com](mailto:jackiescalia@gmail.com)

## UNIFORMS (Chairperson: Mary Duffy)

Students are issued uniforms. They will be fitted and measured at uniform distribution, during the week of band camp. You will be given report times. The uniforms are provided at no charge to the students. The uniforms consist of quite a few components (each has their own identifying number). Please note each of the numbers at home, and have your child know their numbers as well. This is especially useful on rainy nights – when the raincoats come off and are put on a bench – they all look alike! ***Your student is responsible for the uniform pieces and number issued to them.*** The Uniform Chairperson will also have the numbers recorded. Our uniforms are a recognizable symbol of *the sights and sounds of excellence*. Our students wear the uniform with pride. Our tartan (the plaid of the uniform) is officially called *MacLeod of Lewis* from Scotland. **Our uniforms are very costly, approximately \$1,000 each. Please remind your child to be very responsible with it.**

Check the uniform as soon as it is issued. Make sure there are no buttons missing, tears or missing pieces. Occasionally the pants need to be hemmed (do not cut them). If you need items (i.e. buttons), contact the Uniform Chairperson: Mary Duffy, [MaryDuffy625@gmail.com](mailto:MaryDuffy625@gmail.com) (please do not wait until the first football game). The students may not know how to put the uniform together, if not the upper classman will help. Many of the pieces have different names, for example the sash is called a **baldric**.

- **T Shirts** -- The issued T-shirt is a part of the uniform. It is to always to be worn underneath the other pieces. The band t-shirt is not to be worn at any other time during the year, or by anyone else. The initial t-shirt is paid for by the association, extra t-shirts may be

ordered prior to band camp for \$12.00 (see order form). It is helpful to have an extra, especially when there is a Friday football game and Saturday competition back to back.

- **Shoes: \$40** - ordered at uniform distribution (please note that these shoes are the only shoes to be worn with the uniform). There are samples to try on for size at uniform distribution.
- **Garment bags \$20** All band students must have a garment bag (we sell one) for transporting the uniform.
- **Gloves for field uniforms - \$5.**
- Pipers, Majors, Percussion & Guard will need **tall black socks - \$5** (we have them available).
- Pipe Band Uniforms are handled separately as part of Pipe Band and are run through Mr. Smolinski.

A **uniform cleaning fee \$15** is also due the night of uniform distribution. This ensures that all uniforms will be cleaned during the summer, so the uniform you receive at distribution is freshly dry-cleaned.

The shoes, socks, garment bags and cleaning fees are ordered and paid for at uniform distribution. Please make sure your child has money with them. All checks are made payable to the **WMBPA**. The uniform will be held at school until fees are paid.

### **Additional uniform information**

- There are changes to the uniforms at times, ("rain uniform", special baldric, etc.) **Remind App** will show the order of the day – always check it before a game/competition.
- Bring raincoat and/or varsity jacket to every event. No other jacket may be worn over the uniform. Layer underneath in the chilly weather.
- Clean and dry shoes after every use with dry or damp cotton cloth and **DO NOT** put vinyl gauntlets. dryer.
- **DO NOT** clean the PLAIDS. The constant cleaning will destroy the bright colors on this expensive material. If there is a stain, or they get dirty, please contact a uniform manager immediately. **The jacket and pants must be cleaned during the season at your expense** (please take plaid pieces off before dry-cleaning).
- **Strong wooden hangers** are a must for the uniforms, with rotating hooks. The uniforms are hung in odd places mostly on windows of the school bus. The plastic ones, even if strong will not hold up to the constant manipulation of the uniform on and off the hanger.
- Gloves and warm hats are **NOT** part of the uniform but can be worn while sitting in bleachers at the football games. Try a dollar store for fingerless gloves for instruments like flute, clarinet and sax.

## PRACTICE

*Early is on time; on time is late; late is inexcusable!*

In the beginning it seems like you don't have time for anything else but practice and driving to and from practice. Marching band is an art. The season is short and intense with a VERY full schedule. There are a lot of practices – you will see the payoff at the games and competitions. **Please remind your child how important it is to *attend all practices*, everyone's position is important.**



**DO NOT PULL UP OR PARK IN DRIVEWAY IN FRONT OF SCHOOL WHERE THE MARCHING BAND LINES UP (yes, this needs to be repeated)!**

This area is very busy and students are walking and moving equipment and props through this area. Having cars in this area is unsafe. It is also likely the equipment truck is on its way and will need access, if not already there!

## FOOTBALL GAMES AND COMPETITIONS

On the morning of a game, students will bring their uniforms and everything else they need with them to school. (check with the bus driver prior to that first game as some bus drivers don't allow it if they are full). In the event they are not able to bring uniform on the bus, parents may drop off uniforms between 7am-7:20 AM or 2:00-2:30 PM only. **DO NOT DROP OFF DURING SCHOOL HOURS.**

Games and competitions always have entrance fees for spectators, approximately \$3.00 to \$8.00 (football games) and \$10-\$12 (competitions). Regional and state competitions may be slightly higher \$20-25 (Dr. Mac may have discounted tickets prior to these events and will announce on the Remind app prior to event). Programs are also usually available for a purchase. Some venues (Rutgers, Metlife Stadium) also have restrictions on what can be brought in.

Be prepared for many types of bleachers, ALWAYS hard and uncomfortable! Blankets and stadium seats will help! Sometimes there are no seats at all so it is a good idea to put your lawn chairs in the car ahead of time.

When other bands are performing, it is very disrespectful to move about and especially up and down the bleachers or in front of the band. Usually there is someone at the ends of the bleachers to stop excessive movement so be respectful of the position. If you see someone moving around when you know they should not be, explain it to them "nicely", they may be new or never told before.

How to embarrass our kids or to tell them how great they are at competitions: Send them an air gram. These are usually purchased for \$3.00 each before the start of the events. This is an announcement before or after our specific band performs on the field. Things like "Way to go

freshman"; "Good luck to YOUR KIDS NAME and the flute section" or even things like "Isn't this better than cleaning your room", are typical. Be creative, it is your time to shine on them. They do hear you and they listen for them. A candy gram is another thing to do; these are purchased also for about \$2.00. These are candy bars that will be sent specifically to your child with a written note on it from you. They are usually given to the band director sometime that night and then to the kids either in the bus on return or the next school day. Both candy grams and air grams are usually limited to a specific amount per band so please give everyone a chance to buy one.

Trophies are given at the end of the competitions so be polite and don't leave after our band performs. Remember we are there to see and support ALL bands. One thing to remember is that due to our size we don't always compete against many other bands in our class. Sizes are usually less than 25, 25-50, 50-125, and greater than 125. Encourage the kids to do their best each time. Who knows who might be watching (perhaps a talent scout? You never know)!

There are early days, late nights and far distances, so be prepared and remember to get a good night sleep and eat a healthy meal. Helpful things to bring to the event include: pen or pencil to mark the scores, or to guess your score ahead of time, highlighters to mark the bands competing against us (they are not always in order), blankets to sit on, warm drinks, hats, gloves and anything else to keep you comfortable. A really important thing is a loud voice to cheer the band on - and noisemakers if you would like.

For home games, the students will need either a bag dinner, or \$\$ to buy dinner at the concession stand. For away games, the students will need a bag lunch. There may not be a concession stand at the away games, however usually snacks are available for purchase. WMBPA owns the concession stand at the football field. Consider volunteering during the games. It's fun!

During the football games, the band usually is "off duty" 3rd quarter, at the discretion of the band director. They generally have time to eat before the home game at the concession stand so always make sure they have money with them. They can bring snacks for the bus ride (no glass bottles or things that can spill and stain the uniform. No hot chocolate while in uniform, or any other "dark" beverage.

Normally at away games, we play a pre-game show and on home games we play during half time. If you are late driving to an away game, you may miss the performance. Try to be there 30 minutes prior to the game starting. On occasion, we may also play during the half time at away games. Please note: **during away games we play toward the home bleachers. Feel free to go to the other side to see the show and then return to our game side when the football game begins.**

All students' cell phones must be left on the bus with the rest of their belongings during all performances. After a game or competition, it is a good idea to have your student text you when they are heading back to the school so you can plan your pickup time. Keep in mind that once students arrive back they need to help unload the trucks and put the larger instruments and props away, so allow for an additional 20-30 minutes before your child can depart.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

There are sectional practices held in the summer for students to practice with others with the same instruments. Your child will be contacted by their section leader for these practices.

There is a *mandatory band camp* held at the high school. This year it is Monday, **August 22 – August 26**. The last day of Band Camp there is a BBQ dinner for the band students, provided by the band parents. The evening finishes with a performance for the parents! We will see what they have been learning during the week. You will be impressed! Band merchandise will be available for sale that evening.

Group and individual pictures are usually taken in September before a competition or game. They are typically taken without instruments. If you would like them to be taken with their instrument, let your child know, so they can tell the photographer that day.

Band members are high school students, whether they are freshman or seniors, they need to have respect and take responsibility for the band and the uniform. If something happens to their instrument it is THEIR responsibility to make arrangements for the repair.

Remind your child to keep things together especially on the bus. Make sure they have all the right things for their uniform before you leave the house and before you leave the parking lot. If left on bus or in band room sometimes there is a small fee to get it back in order to be able to go to the football games or competitions in complete uniform.

The students have a band council, which consists of a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and librarian. They meet before regular practices, and are an integral part of the band's organization. Each section of the band, i.e. flutes, clarinets, etc. has a section leader. Each section has several squad leaders. These squads have 3- 5 people in each squad. There are three drum majors, who lead the band. There are several different bands, and different types of participating band students.

Band consists of many ensembles. Students are required to take a music class which is either Symphonic Band or Wind Ensemble (honors band). Voluntary auxiliary ensembles that run during the course of the year are indoor percussion, pipes and drum corps, jazz band, and color guard. If your student is interested, just ask. Someone will point them in the right direction. There are different categories of student participation. Some students are marching band students, some are applied band students, and some participate as fall athletes.

**Fall Athlete:** Any athlete who participates in a WMHS fall sport. They are exempt from marching season, but not anything else. Fall athletes are required to do spring competition, St. Patrick Day parade, Memorial Day parade, Christmas concert, Spring concert, and the All-District concert. They may participate as a fall athlete all four years.



**Applied Student:** One year application only: Perform at concerts: Spring, Christmas & All District, and are in band class. **They are not considered a part of “marching band”.**

Last, and probably most the most fun and rewarding part of being a band parent, is:

## **Fundraising**

The WMBPA is an active group dedicated to making our children’s band experience a full and rewarding one. The expenses are significant and run the gamut from providing water to scholarships; from building award winning props to renting trucks; to producing social events such as the band banquet, band camp bbq and ice cream social; to giving awards; to providing bussing to St. Patrick’s Day parade and includes so much more. Band offers a trip every other year. Students have personal accounts to accumulate funds to help offset trip costs. To help raise money we have a robust fundraising program. Please encourage your child to participate! Please come out yourself and participate. There is something for everyone to help offset costs. Some are activity-based, i.e. Tag Day; some are sales, i.e. cheesecake, bar pies, hoagie day, etc. We are all volunteers. We need more volunteers. We are all proud to be a part of making “*the sights and sounds of excellence*” a reality!

GET involved! Try something new or do what you know you are good at. It is very rewarding, your children will reap the benefit and who knows, you may even make new friends!! SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER TODAY (or anytime this season)!

## **The Highlander Band Guiding Principles**

**Be a person of integrity**

**Lead by example**

(meet the standard you are holding others to)

**Strive for excellence without arrogance**

**Do your best**

**Treat everyone with dignity and respect**

**Tolerate honest mistakes from people who are doing their best**

**Speak well of others**

(Rumors undermine human dignity)

**Seek the truth**

(Rumors and unverified anecdotes undermine morale)

**Keep a sense of humor and be able to laugh at yourself**