

The Unofficial Guide for New Marching Band Parents



Marching Band 101

A guide for new band parents (and veterans too)

This booklet is the product of former "new band parents" who spent a good bit of time in our first year in various stages of confusion. In the many hours we spent watching practices, picking up our kids, and going to competitions we have all felt confused, lost and totally bewildered at one time or another. We hope this document will help ease you through the transition from "new" band parent to "veteran" band parent and Music Booster!

CONGRATULATIONS AND WELCOME!

By allowing your child to join the very remarkable Michigan City High School Marching Wolf Pack Band, you will make a commitment to supporting music education at its finest! The hard work, self discipline and many diverse experiences encountered will provide a lifetime of great memories for both your child and you.

The MCHS Wolf Pack Marching Band is an educational arts program dedicated to providing the youth of our high school with the means to develop life skills, musical skills, and performance skills, build character and friendships, and foster teamwork while cultivating the talents of tomorrow's leaders.

For most of us (parents and students alike), the transition from middle school band programs to high school band programs is huge, especially in marching band. The increased expectations come with greater rewards, in terms of your student's accomplishments and in the pride you will have in watching their accomplishments. This document is our attempt to share with you some of the finer points of making the most of your years as a band parent; however we realize that over this coming school year, and the beginning of next year, you will most likely have many questions about the MCHS Wolf Pack Marching Band. While this booklet will hopefully answer many of your questions, we know there are some we missed. We encourage you to call when any questions arise.

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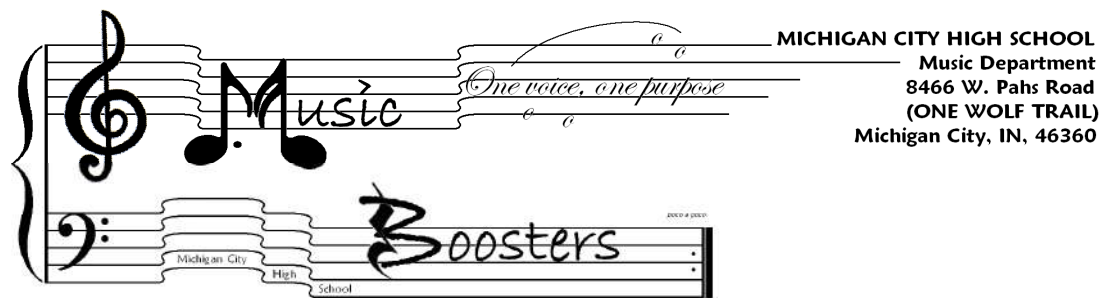
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WHAT IS THE MUSIC BOOSTERS?

The MCHS Marching Band program is supported by a parent run organization - **the MCAS Music Boosters**. The Music Boosters exists solely through volunteer parents in order to help provide your students with an enjoyable and rewarding music experience. As a parent of a band member you automatically become a member of The Michigan City Area School Music Boosters. This organization depends upon the involvement of every parent with a student in the Music Department. Although committee work is not a requirement for membership in The Michigan City Area School Music Boosters, we encourage everyone to get involved and experience the fun and satisfaction of supporting our students and the band.

What you are willing to offer of your time and talents will make all the difference to the band students. We really do need your help to whatever extent you can offer!

Music Booster meetings are held on the second Monday of the month. The meeting begins at 6:00 p.m. in the Band Room. Any change in the schedule will be sent via an email from Wolfpackboosters@gmail.com **We welcome all new parents and look forward to getting to know you and your students!**

YOUR MUSIC BOOSTER OFFICERS

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MARCHING BAND

Q. Will my son or daughter need to audition to be a member of the Michigan City High School Wolf Pack Marching Band?

A. Only percussion and the Color Guard are required to audition. These auditions are held in the spring for the following school year. (i.e., auditions for the 2012-2013 seasons will be held in the spring of 2012.) Percussion auditions are for placement only.

Q. How will I know when the auditions are scheduled?

A. The audition times and locations are announced through the middle school music departments.

Q. If my child does not need to audition, how does the sign-up process work?

A. Signing up is very easy; it all starts with the Marching Band Kick Off. Wolf Pack Marching Band registration forms are distributed early in the spring at the Kick Off for the parents to complete. After the forms are completed, it should be turned in to your Band Directors. You will then start receiving information from the Directors and the Music Boosters at wolfpackboosters@gmail.com regarding practices and performances.

Q. Is there a specific music class that my child should register for in 9th grade?

A. As a musician in the Marching Band, your child is required to schedule a band class. Incoming freshmen will be placed in the Concert Band. Scheduling a band class is mandatory unless a schedule conflict cannot be resolved. These cases should be addressed on an individual basis with the Band Directors. Members of the Color Guard do not have to schedule a band class.

SCHEDULES

Q. When can we see a schedule for the year?

A. The complete schedule is usually finalized by band registration/uniform fittings in June.

Q. How do we keep up to date on band schedule changes, since our kids don't tell us anything?

A. The best way to stay on top of the band's activities is to attend the Michigan City Area School Music Boosters meetings and provide us with your email address so that you can be included in the Music Boosters email group.

Q. When does the Michigan City High School Wolf Pack Marching Band practice?

A. Marching Band starts with April practices, a night camp in June, followed by the summer parades. After a short break during the summer, the Michigan City High School Wolf Pack Marching Band will resume with a two-week Band Camp in August that the students are required to attend. Mr. Ford will provide your students with a practice schedule, which is typically every Monday and Wednesday from 4 - 6 p.m. be sure to ask your student for the schedule.

Percussion and Color Guard will have additional practices.

Band students will receive their music and CD of the songs for practicing and learning the pieces in the Spring. ALL students are expected to have their music memorized prior to Band Camp.

Once school starts, the Michigan City High School Wolf Pack Marching Band practices after school until the end of football season. Dates and times will be announced as soon as they are set.

All practices and band camp are held at Michigan City High School. Students are responsible to find their own way to and from band camp and practices.

Q. When does the Michigan City High School Wolf Pack Marching Band perform?

A. The band performs at all Michigan City High School Home football games. The band also performs at various parades, band festivals and competitions. Some of the scheduled performances for the 2012-2013 season include: Michigan City Summer Festival Parade, LaPorte 4th of July Parade...

BAND CAMP

Q. What is band camp?

A. Marching Band has two band camps. One held at night during the last week of June to prepare for the July parades, and the second is two weeks in August just prior to the start of school at Michigan City High School. Percussion and Color Guard will have additional practices. Dates and times for the summer will be announced before the end of the school year. Band camp is dedicated to learning the music, drill, marching fundamentals, as well as sectional time.

Q. What is the purpose of band camp?

A. Band camp is an opportunity for the band to become familiar with each other, their music and formations. Various activities, such as pizza parties, allow members of the band to bond with one another.

Q. Is band camp mandatory?

A. Yes, band camp is mandatory. The staff and students work VERY hard throughout these days. It is important for the students to attend as many of those sessions as possible because this is when they bring together the music that they have been learning on their own prior to camp and the drill for their marching band show. Help to encourage your student to have their music memorized BEFORE camp starts!

Individual problems should be discussed in advance with the Band Directors.

Remember to accommodate band camp in your family's vacation plans this summer!

Q. Is band camp difficult?

A. The kids get quite a workout. Be prepared for plenty of sweating. It's an experience most of the kids "love to hate." Students must follow an appropriate dress code of - t-shirts, shorts, comfortable sneakers, hat, sunglasses and sunscreen. Bring a water container - unlimited refills are available throughout the day - water is your best friend!

Q. What is the benefit of band camp?

A. One major benefit of band camp - when your freshman or new marching band student arrives for the first day of high school, he or she will already be a part of a well respected group and will have a whole new group of friends (across all grades) to help with the transition into high school. Our band students look out for each other and especially for the new members.

PERFORMANCES

Q. Are all practices and performances mandatory?

A. Yes. Each band member contributes a piece of the puzzle that is on display each week during our season. It is important to have all the pieces of the puzzle at rehearsal. However, there are occasions that can't be avoided and the band member may be excused by the Band Director with proper notification. (e.g. illness or unavoidable academic or school related conflict)

Q. Does attendance at games, parades, and festivals affect my child's band grade?

A. No, marching band is an extra-curricular activity that extends from the classroom. Absences are evaluated as they occur.

Q. How do the students get to the various performances?

A. Keeping track of 70+ band members is a large and difficult task. For this reason we ask that your children travel to and from all events with the band by the transportation provided (school bus or charter bus).

Q. How accurate is "Return Time?" from performances?

A. While every effort is made to list accurate "Return Times" so that you know when to pick up your student from MCHS, there will be times, due to traffic or some other unforeseen problem, that the return will be delayed by a few minutes. We will try to communicate this if it is going to be a problem.

Q. Is there a communication chain?

A. The Michigan City High School Music Booster volunteers place calls or sends email messages to all band members to alert members of extraordinary events.

Q. Can parents attend the rehearsals and performances?

A. Parents are encouraged to attend any and all rehearsals and performances. Chaperones/Pit Crew helpers are needed for each event and Sign ups will be available for this purpose. All volunteers traveling with the group and/or helping with the students will need to fill out the required MCHS volunteer forms each year and be approved.

MARCHING BAND SEASON

The Marching Band Performance season starts as band camp ends. Practice continues after school during the week. Mr. Ford will provide your students with a practice schedule, which is typically every Monday and Wednesday from 4 - 6 p.m. be sure to ask your student for the schedule.

FOOTBALL GAMES

The band performs the National Anthem at the start of the game and then their Marching Band show at half time at all football games (Friday evenings), as well as playing in the stands during the game. The band has a specially marked section in the stands and many of the band parents sit together near the band - a great opportunity to get to know other parents and see your student perform up close.

FESTIVALS

The marching band performs with other high schools bands in the fall. The festivals are located throughout northwest Indiana. Your student is responsible for having a permission slip signed that will cover all events (they can not get on the bus without it). This form is one of the necessary pieces of paper that is signed at the end of band camp. Please come to as many events as you can. All of the students appreciate hearing the cheering from the stands. It is great to watch the competitions and cheer the kids on.

UNIFORMS

Your student will be issued a formal marching uniform consisting of jacket, pants, shoes, hat, plume and gloves (as appropriate by section). You will need to provide white socks (at least mid calf). Students are responsible for assuring that they treat their uniform with great care. For each event, the uniforms are issued to the student in a labeled garment bag. The student is responsible for returning the uniform properly hung to the trailer or uniform area. Uniforms are sent out for dry cleaning once a year. White pants are laundered by the Music Boosters on an as needed basis during the season. The uniform should not be removed without permission from the band director.

Each student is also issued a Marching Band T-shirt to be worn to school on Friday during Marching Band season. The shirt is also worn under their uniform at all marching events. Additionally, your student is issued Marching Band Shorts for wearing during the summer parades. Your student should bring a pair of cool, comfortable shorts to be worn under their formal marching uniform. We strongly recommend against dark colors or patterned as the pants are white.

Q. Are there costs involved with the uniforms?

A. Michigan City High School Wolf Pack Marching Band uniforms are provided by the Michigan City Area Schools. Students are fitted for their uniforms in the summer and are given specific care instructions. Michigan City High School Music Booster volunteers are responsible for the alterations. The uniforms are kept at Michigan City High School and checked out and in for each performance. Parents and students are responsible for the repair or replacement of uniforms that are lost or damaged.

Each student is given a Michigan City High School Wolf Pack Marching Band shirt. This shirt is worn underneath the Michigan City High School Wolf Pack Marching Band uniform. Additional shirts can be purchased for \$ 25.00. The student must also provide white socks to be worn when wearing the band uniform.

All Michigan City High School Wolf Pack Marching Band members who play an instrument are required to purchase specific white marching band shoes (these are included in your Marching Band Fees). These shoes are ordered in the summer from a company selected to by the Michigan City High School Band staff. The shoes are usually delivered the first week of band camp.

It can not be said too clearly or too often: **Please make sure your student's name is on both their band shirt and their band shoes! Finding something in lost and found is much easier when the owner can be properly identified.**

Summer uniforms: In the summer, the Michigan City High School Wolf Pack Marching Band wears their band shirt and supplied shorts, white socks and white band shoes.

Q. Where are the uniforms kept?

A. The uniforms are kept at Michigan City High School in the uniform room or the Michigan City High School Wolf Pack Marching Band Trailer. The students pick up their uniform before an event and return it after the event.

Q. What is worn under the uniform?

A. Lightweight white shorts and the current band shirt for warmer weather. In cooler weather students may wear sweat pants or warm-up pants and long-sleeved shirts or long underwear. Denim and bulky clothes that bunch up under the uniform should not be worn.

It's imperative that your student comes to each event prepared! They should have their instrument, music (if needed), CLEAN shoes, hat, gloves and white socks (at least mid calf). Without these items - they will not be able to participate.

PLANNING AHEAD FOR BAND PICNIC & BAND BANQUET

SENIOR NIGHT - It has been a tradition for the MCHS Wolfpack Marching Band to honor our senior students and their parents at one of the football games. Students are escorted onto the field by their parents or guardians to be greeted and acknowledged by the principal and the band director. Try to be there for Senior Night to see the presentation. After the game we try to have a cake at the trailer to further celebrate our senior band students.

BAND BANQUET - It has been a tradition for the MCHS Wolfpack Marching Band to celebrate our successful year with students, family and faculty for a year-end Band Banquet. A theme appropriate party experience includes pot luck dinner, videos and award presentations.

HELP US HELP THE STUDENTS

- Many hands make lighter work!

During the year, but especially during marching season, the students need many helping hands behind the scenes to make their shows successful. As your student enters high school, this is one of the few opportunities you may have to stay involved with their activities and get to know the kids they spend a great deal of their time with through the week. The students realize very quickly that Marching Band doesn't happen without a lot of parent support.

Q. How do I volunteer to become a chaperone or to participate on another Michigan City High School Wolf Pack Marching Band committee?

A. There is a listing of some of the opportunities on the next page. You can volunteer for any of the Michigan City High School Wolf Pack Marching Band committees by completing a volunteer form or by calling or emailing the Michigan City High School Music Boosters at wolfpackboosters@gmail.com.

Q. What are the responsibilities for chaperones?

A. The primary function of the chaperones is to assist the Directors. Duties for chaperones vary from event to event and are discussed before departure. Chaperones are expected to do the following: relay accurate information, do bus counts, assist with equipment, distribute water, escort students to restrooms and help keep our band safe.

Q. Do the chaperones wear any special clothes?

A. Chaperone attire is a Michigan City High School Band Booster T-shirt. These shirts can be purchased through the Michigan City High School Music Boosters.

FUNDRAISING

We conduct several fundraisers throughout the year to support the Band program. Your Band fees only scratch the surface of the expenses incurred in running our outstanding program. Please try to participate as you can in any of these or provide us with your ideas for others:

Q. Does my child need to participate in all of the fundraisers?

A. Participation in fundraising is optional.

Q. How many fundraisers are held during the year?

A. A number of fundraisers are held each year and the students can choose to participate in one, all or none. This year's fundraisers include: Band Discount Cards, Port-a-Pit Chicken Sale, Holly's Gives Back Day, Hacienda Gives Back Day, etc.

Q. How much profit is made for the students on the different fundraisers?

A. The profit margin varies on each fundraiser. The Music Boosters evaluate opportunities before bringing them to the group.

Q. How is the Michigan City High School Wolf Pack Marching Band funded?

A. Funding comes from 3 major sources: student dues, earnings from the concession stand, and fundraisers.

Q. What does the Michigan City High School Music Boosters use their funds to do?

A. The Music Boosters uses its funds to support all of the music programs at the school. For the Marching Band specifically, the Music Boosters help fund awards at the end of the year, provide refreshments for the band members, help with trip expenses, and provide publications. The Music Boosters periodically provides funds for major expenditures not funded by the school district. For example the equipment trailer and the pit hauling cart were purchased by the Music Boosters for the band.

Q. What if I can not afford to send my child to band camp or on the trips?

A. Financial need should be addressed with the Band Director, in order to maintain confidentiality.

The Music Boosters will be looking for parents to:

- Help with uniform fitting and alterations.
- Help with cleaning and organizing the uniform and equipment rooms.
- Help "lost and bewildered parents and students" find their way.
- Help to pack coolers with water bottles and ice, as well as distribute water to band members during parades, football games, and competitions.
- Help load equipment onto the truck as needed or getting the equipment down to the field during home games.
- Help wipe down bleachers where students will be seated (we're all about saving those uniform pants!) and roll out the bleacher seats for the band section. Help keep others from stepping on them...
- Help sell gloves as needed (\$5 per pair) in uniform room.
- Help assist students by responding to uniform emergencies (my zipper won't zip, I can't find my gloves, I need a band aid, do you have nail polish remover for the fabulous purple polish I'm not supposed to be wearing? My hem came out of my pants, etc.)
- Help to assimilate students in line to march to field or board buses
- If the band takes buses to a performance, assure that supplies are present and roll is taken prior to departure at each location.
- Help getting equipment on and off the field during half-time shows and events (drum major podiums, instruments, etc.)
- Help chaperone events, including water distribution, the 3rd quarter concessions, and any as needed bleacher scenarios.
- Help with post event instruction on hanging of uniforms and collection back to the trailer.
- Help with any other special talents or skills you have to offer the program!
- Help with planning and creative suggestions for Band Banquet.

All volunteers must have an application for volunteer services form and volunteer consent form on file with the Michigan City Area Schools. We will also be logging hours in the volunteer book kept in the uniform room.