

*West Stokes High
School*

2013-2014

Band Handbook

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Purpose

The purpose of the West Stokes High School Band program is to educate young people through the medium of music performance. By individual and collective involvement in this program, students will grow and mature as musicians, learners, and people.

The purpose of this handbook is to be an informative, reliable resource that allows our band and the operations of our band to run smoothly and effectively. This handbook will help to ensure student success in the classroom as well as on the performing stage. Grading policies, student expectations, fall and spring schedules, and other important information is contained. Both students and parents should read the handbook thoroughly then sign and return the last page to Mr. Jarvis.

Philosophy of Teaching Music

Music is a very important part of our existence as people. It is all around us. We hear music on the radio, in the concert hall, in church, at the movies, on the internet, and in our schools. It is important to our emotional development, our religious practices, our entertainment, and to some, our artistry.

It is our goal to instill an appreciation for music within the lives of each of our students. Each day in band should be an exciting experience where students are challenged musically, given the proper tools to learn, and then expected to rise to meet the opportunity of success. We will strive to keep the educational environment fresh and new, and our students excited about learning and the music-making process.

No band succeeds without a determined plan of action and a commitment to a dedicated work ethic. There is no replacement for hard work. Talent, ability, intelligence, and other gifts are useless unless they are cultivated and developed. Excellence will be the standard in the West Stokes Band program. Students will always be expected to give their best effort; nothing less will be acceptable.

Band is a performing art and is co-curricular. This means that from time to time students will be expected to participate in events outside of the normal school day. A more detailed description of exact requirements will be given on the following pages.

The objectives of the West Stokes High School band program are:

- to continually develop student musicians both individually and collectively
- to operate and perform as a group of disciplined young adults
- to consistently demonstrate group excellence in musical performance
- to create a musical product that inspires the performer and the listener
- to seek to understand music academically and aesthetically, especially as it relates to music theory, history, and performance
- to continually develop a learning community of music education in and around the WSHS Band.

The Eight Core Philosophical Elements of a Quality Band Program:

1. **Musicianship:** Any band should really be about one primary thing: music. We expect each student in the band to work hard to learn more about music and the finer points of performing on his/her respective instrument. The better one can play his/her instrument, the more you will understand the components of music. This will lead to a higher level of musical success and ultimately will be more enjoyable.
2. **Discipline and Self Discipline:** Good discipline is vital to the success of any group and vital to your individual successes in life. It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the West Stokes Band to do their individual part to aid in the success of the band as a whole. This is YOUR band.
3. **Responsibility:** Each person in the band has certain responsibilities that they are expected to take seriously. Always ask yourself these questions when in doubt about any action: Will my actions reflect in a good way or a bad way on our program? Am I doing my part to the best of my personal ability? Are my actions helping or hurting myself and the success of the band program? Each and every member of the band is important to the success of the group. Remember that others are counting on you to do your part and to do it well.
4. **Attitude:** Forming and keeping a good attitude is very important in being successful. A good attitude is shown more through actions than through words. Attitude is much more important than talent or ability.
5. **Image:** Because of the visible nature of the band, each band member must always be aware of the importance of good behavior. This is how a good IMAGE is built. The band member must always remember that he or she represents not only the West Stokes Band, but also the band staff, West Stokes High School, and the local community whenever performing or appearing in public. Any poor behavior while representing the program will reflect poorly on you as an individual, on our band program, on our school, and on our community. Also remember that your actions in and around school or town, even when not with the band can reflect on the band program. Think before you do.
6. **Hard Work:** There is a saying that anything that is worth having always comes with a price. This is very true when striving toward excellence in music performance. Having a successful band program will come from many hours of hard work and dedication by each individual band member. Hard Work during rehearsal/practices each day is essential for a successful musical organization.
7. **Effort:** Each and every band member of the band program is expected to give his/her best effort during each rehearsal/practice. This is not always easy, but is one of the components of a successful band. Come prepared each day ready to give your best effort.
8. **Respect:** All members of the West Stokes Band program are expected to show respect for their fellow band members, all equipment used by members of the band program (personal or school owned), the band staff, and for the band and school facilities. Always be respectful of people and property.

Student Responsibilities

- 1. Be There.** Students are expected to be present and accounted for at every band performance of the year, including but not limited to: band concerts, football games, band festivals, parades, and other performing venues. As band is a performing art, students will earn a grade that reflects their participation at **all performances**. It is vitally important for the success of our program that all members be present at all performances. Any student who misses a performance for a school-excused reason will be given an alternate assignment equal in time and effort to the originally scheduled band performance.
- 2. Be Prepared.** Students are expected to be prepared for every performance with proper clothing, all music, all parts of your instrument, extra reeds, valve oil, pencils, and other needed materials. This also means being prepared for class on a daily basis with instrument, music, pencil, extra reeds, valve oil, mallets, etc. It is the students' responsibility to take care of these items. Students will receive points off of their daily grade if they are not prepared for class. Being prepared also means having all music learned for an assigned day, and being able to play your part alone, or with a small ensemble. Notes and rhythms should be learned at home so that our collective time is not wasted.
- 3. Be Respectful.** Students should strive to be respectful to the education process. The teaching and learning that takes place in the music rehearsal is vitally important. Students should always seek ways to participate in a positive manner.
- 4. Be Positive.** Students are expected to display a positive attitude and a willingness to work hard at all times and in all situations. There is no place for negativity in the band room.

Procedures for Band Rehearsal/Class

- Be on time for class. If you are held over by another West Stokes faculty member, ask them to write you a signed note. Students arriving late to class without an authorized note are responsible for making up the rehearsal time that they missed after school. Students need to be in their seats with their horns out and ready to play by the time the late bell rings. Class will begin promptly when the late bell rings.
- Come prepared to class with all materials and items that you will need. Students are expected to remain in the classroom and be actively engaged in the class until the class period ends. Use the restroom before coming to band. Students are asked to use the restroom between class changes.
- Each student in the band is expected to play everyday. If a student is too ill to participate fully in class, the student will be asked to go to the office and call home. If your instrument is not in proper working order and the issue is minor, the instrument will be fixed during band class. If there is a serious repair issue with an instrument, the student will need to have the instrument repaired and will need a signed note from home stating that the instrument is in the repair shop. If an instrument is being repaired, ask to receive a loaner instrument for the repair period so that the student does not get behind in band class. Failure to bring a repair note or a forgotten instrument will result in a zero for that day's grade.

- There is to be **NO GUM, FOOD, CANDY, OR DRINKS IN THE BAND ROOM.** The band room is not the place for such things. The facilities at West Stokes are clean and neat and we will keep them that way. Bottled water is acceptable, provided that it does not become a distraction to the learning process.
- There is to be no non-essential talking or other disruptions. Not only is this rude and impolite, it is a serious interruption of the rehearsal process.
- Keep the band room neat and clean. Put your trash in a trash can and not on the floor or in a cubby. This is a place of community. Take care of your own trash.
- Instruments should be placed in their proper case and in the proper storage area at the end of each rehearsal or performance event. Do not leave your cases and music lying around. Music should be put in an appropriate folder and taken home.
- **DON'T LEAVE YOUR INSTRUMENTS AT SCHOOL. TAKE THEM HOME AND PRACTICE THEM!!!** Practicing is an expectation. Regular practice does wonders for student improvement. For those students who play large instruments that are difficult to transport, a practice instrument will be provided for them to keep at home (tubas, baritones). Percussion students are expected to practice their parts as well. The band room will be open after school for percussionists to practice. They may also come in at other times of the day if it is permissible with the director, principal, and other teachers.
- Sitting with good posture is expected. Great bands sit with great posture.
- Only West Stokes percussionists are allowed to touch percussion instruments.
- No student is allowed to leave the band room without the permission of the director.
- Be sure to help keep the band room, upstairs practice room, and all storage areas clean.
- Proper dress for all performances is required. Mr. Jarvis will discuss each situation in class. Failure to dress the correct way for a given performance will result in the student being pulled from a performance and will negatively effect his or her grade.

Contraband

At no time will tobacco products, alcohol, drugs, weapons of any kind, or profanity be allowed. If a band student is found in possession of these items while on or off campus, they will be disciplined by the West Stokes administration and, depending on the severity of the infraction, may be expelled indefinitely from the band program. There will be no exceptions.

Absences

Excused and non-excused absences for band performances and rehearsals will be determined by the attendance policy of West Stokes High School. Please refer to the student handbook (red) for details.

If a student knows that he or she has a doctor's appointment, dentist appointment, court date, scheduled surgery or anything of the nature, it is the student's responsibility to let Mr. Jarvis know at least two weeks ahead of time. Please **DO NOT SCHEDULE APPOINTMENTS OF THIS NATURE TWO WEEKS BEFORE ANY**

PERFORMANCE DATE if at all possible. Participation in band is important and gets even more vital as performance dates approach. Should there ever be a conflict, it is the student's responsibility to inform Mr. Jarvis of the issue. There will then be a reasonable solution so that all parties involved may be successful.

Students who have an excused absence will be required to make up the rehearsal time they missed after school. This should be done before the date of the absence.

Marching Band Policy

This school year, marching band is a completely after school activity. No grades will be given for marching band specifically. However, there are guidelines for students performing in the marching band. If a student misses an evening marching practice, the student will sit out the next performance. The student must come to the performance and dress out, but will not be allowed to perform the field show with the band. A student who misses two consecutive practices is in danger of being removed from the marching band and a student who misses three or more absences will be removed from the marching band. Sickness and family emergencies will be considered excused absences and will be dealt with appropriately. Work, transportation issues, birthday parties, and family trips will not be excused. Marching Band is extra-curricular and voluntary. If you make the commitment to do it, do it well. No student will be allowed to miss a performance at a football game or band competition. Football games and Band Competitions are listed on the calendar page of the band website at www.weststokesband.weebly.com. Be present for them all. The band director reserves the right to remove any student from the marching band for absences or improper behavior.

Grading Policy

Student grades will be earned, not given. Students will earn their grade based on the following factors:

1. Student attendance at all rehearsals/practices. (Dailey Grades)
2. Student attention, cooperation, and effort displayed during class. (Daily Grades)
3. Grades from playing assignments and tests. (Test Grades)
4. Participation in ALL scheduled performances and Concerts. Also, appropriate work on all assigned projects. (Performance/Projects Grades)
5. Practice outside of regular band class for preparation of music. (Homework Grades)
6. Improvement in musical skills and knowledge as demonstrated through daily rehearsals and teacher observation. (Daily Grades)

As a general rule, grades will be broken down into four general areas:

- Performance/Projects Grades (35%) – Based on student participation at all band performances and required events.
- Test Grades (10%) – Based on playing and written evaluations.
- Homework Grades (10%) – Based on home practice AND getting papers and signed documents back to the director on time.

- Daily Grades (45%) – Based on full student participation in all daily rehearsals/practices, and teacher observation of developing skills

Individual Practice

Individual practice time at home is paramount to the success of our band program. Each student will be expected to practice at home on a regular basis, just like doing homework for any other class. A collective band can only be as good as its individual members and the only way for the individual members to get better is through consistent and purposed practice. It is the student's responsibility to come to band class everyday, able and ready to play their part. Notes and rhythms should be learned at home so that our collective time together is not spent on individuals, but on the group. **PRACTICE AT HOME REGULARLY!!** This is the student's personal responsibility. Practice time for each student will vary, but should be around 3 hours per week or more.

Private Lessons

Student private instrument lessons are highly encouraged. These would be a great benefit to each student as an individual player and would help our overall band program tremendously. Lessons are not required but are strongly encouraged for all band students.

Instrument Information

If you play a school- owned instrument, you will need to fill out a check out sheet from Mr. Jarvis and return it promptly. You will be solely responsible for any damages done to the instrument and will be expected to pay for the repair. Take care of the school instruments. They are not yours, they are the schools. Any misuse of school instruments will be considered as defacing school property and you will receive a discipline referral and will not be allowed to use the instrument anymore. You will also need to fill out an instrument check in sheet at the end of the year/season.

Policies Regarding Trips and Bus Travel

- All band members will ride on the bus to and from all activities. This ensures students' presence and everyone's safety. It also helps to build camaraderie. In emergency situations the director may allow a student to ride home with his/her parents if prior permission is granted from the director.
- Only band members and parent chaperones will be allowed to ride the band bus. No boyfriends/girlfriends, siblings, friends outside the band, etc.
- Good behavior is expected on the bus.
- Students are to remain seated when the bus is running. Do not unload the bus until you have been instructed to do so by Mr. Jarvis only. Moving around from seat to seat is unsafe.
- No body parts or objects are to ever go outside of the bus windows.

- No jam boxes or radios will be allowed on band trips. You may be allowed to bring small radios, ipods, etc.....with headphones. Please remember that the bus cannot be locked and anything you bring will be at your own risk. The director will not be responsible for any personal items, nor will the school system.
- There will be adult supervision on each bus. They are to be treated with respect.
- Students are responsible for loading and unloading their own equipment from the bus and/or band trailer. There will be a fee charged for uniform parts, music, instruments, etc...left on the bus/trailer.
- It is the section leaders' job to ensure that each instrument in their section is on the bus/trailer.
- Seniors will have priority seating on the bus, then juniors, sophomores, and freshmen.
- Should we go on a trip, trip payment due dates will be set far in advance and no student/parent will be allowed to go unless they have paid their balance in full. Trip payments will not be reimbursed if a student or parent back out of a paying trip.
- At no time on a band trip will opposite sexes be in the same hotel room. Students will be allowed to sign up for rooms and rooms may be assigned/adjusted by Mr. Jarvis.
- Just as at school, all school rules apply on band trips.

Uniforms

Our regular band uniforms will be assigned to each student. Uniforms are to be taken care of and always hung on clothes hangers in kept in the uniform closet unless otherwise specified. Students are required to buy their own marching shoes. Students are to keep their shoes at home and bring them only when needed. We will not store shoes in the band room. See Mr. Jarvis if you are in need of shoes. Conversely, uniforms are to be kept in the uniform room at all times. Students should not take their uniform home. Uniforms are to be worn with pride and purpose. Uniforms will be hung on a proper hanger when not being worn and will be kept clean at all times. Unless otherwise specified by the director, the uniform is completely on, or completely off. Band shirts will be the only shirt worn under the uniform jacket.

If there is an opportunity to change clothes when traveling, Mr. Jarvis will give specific instructions to the band regarding each specific trip. There is a \$25 dry-cleaning fee for all band students. Dry-cleaning will take place at the end of the school year in preparation for the next year. We will take the uniforms to the cleaners for you. Please pay these fees by October 1. Checks can be made out to West Stokes Band Boosters.

Parents

Without the strong support of each student's parents the West Stokes Band will not be successful. Each parent is an important member in the musical community of the band students' life. Plenty of parental help will be needed and asked for throughout the school year. The logistical, financial, and emotional support that parents can provide for a band contributes to a unique team-building experience. All parents are invited to be an active part of our band program and to help contribute through multiple avenues to the immediate and long-term success of our students. If you would be willing to help with

activities, plans, finances, fundraisers, transportation, logistics, or multiple other ingredients, please contact Mr. Jarvis. As with the students, guidelines for parents need to be established so that the band and the parent organization can run as smoothly as possible. They are as follows:

- Meetings with parents of an important or serious nature happen inside of the director's office and only there. I will not hold conversations of a serious nature regarding students anywhere other than the band office. Should there ever be an issue, please come to me first, and then if the matter is serious enough, I will ask the school administration for help if it is needed.
- At no time is any parent to verbally address the band. The band director is the only person that has the authority to speak to the band as a band. The band director may allow parents the opportunity to speak to the band if the situation is appropriate.
- The parent organization has a great function of support and assistance to the director and to the band. The final decision of all things related to the band belongs solely to the band director. The director will always make decisions based on what is best for THE BAND.
- Just like student behavior, parent behavior reflects on our band, school, and community. Parents are always asked to reflect a positive image on our band program. Conduct when involved in band events should always be appropriate for the situation.

Fundraising

Assistance in fundraising will be expected of all band students. All funds raised will in one way or another benefit the band program, therefore, students are expected to help in all fundraisers. Fundraisers can be suggested by students or parents but final approval will come from the band director, principal, and board of education. Parents are also asked to help in the fundraising process, as to contribute to the betterment of their students' music education experience.

Great Expectations

The West Stokes band plays an incredible role in the life of our school and community. It is our aim to be ambassadors of music to the community around us as we seek to grow individually and collectively in the realm of music education and performance. We are going to have a great year!

Best Wishes,

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