

West Bloomfield High School

Marching Band

Handbook



Prepared by the Band Boosters Association of West Bloomfield

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Welcome from the Director

Welcome to the West Bloomfield High School Marching Band program! The West Bloomfield High School Marching Band has a long and proud history of providing students with a wonderful opportunity to enrich their lives through participation in this activity. This handbook is designed to help answer your questions and also set forth our expectations of our students and their parents. You will be asked to sign the back page to signify your understanding of our policies.

Who We Are: We are a competitive marching band, which means we travel around the state, and sometimes out of state, during the fall to compete at various invitational competitions. The West Bloomfield Marching Band participates in the Michigan Competing Band Association (MCBA) circuit as a Flight I band. The band has qualified for MCBA Flight I State Finals every year for at least 10 years, and won the Flight I State Championship in 2008. The band also participates in Bands of America (BOA) competitions and has performed at BOA Grand National Championship and Regional Championships. We are very proud of this and we hope our past achievements will lead us to continued and even greater success.

Student Support: For many new students, the prospect of joining the marching band may be intimidating, but the rewards are tremendous. We believe the benefits of membership in the band or color guard far exceed the skills required to play an instrument or spin a flag. First and foremost, the relationships between the members of the band are incredibly powerful, and these relationships are what keeps students, parents, and staff coming back season after season. Marching band gives a student dozens of instant friends who all believe in you and your contribution to our “family”.

New Students Especially for incoming freshmen, involvement in the marching band makes the transition to high school easier. Our upperclassmen pride themselves on creating a safe and supportive environment throughout this new experience. They go out of their way to make new students feel at ease and to ensure they have ample opportunity to be successful in the band.

Staff and Volunteer Support: Through the support of the Band Booster Association of West Bloomfield (BBAWB), we boast a large and highly qualified instructional staff. We have between 8 and 15 instructors at every rehearsal and hire a minimum of one instructor for every section of the band. We also have a support team of volunteer parents who chaperone the cabins at band camp and all competitions throughout the season. This allows us to achieve a great deal of individual attention and keep all activities well supervised.

Communication: Communication with our families is very important. We publish a band newsletter every week that has information for all of our programs, including Marching Band. We also keep in touch with students and families on social media. The Marching Band has Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts. A detailed rehearsal and performance schedule is available on the “Calendar” page of the BBAWB website (wbbands.info), and I provide parents with updates in person at every BBAWB parent meeting.

Thank you for your continued interest and support of the music program in West Bloomfield. Please feel free to contact me at the e-mail address below or at WBHS to discuss our program in detail. I am looking forward to working with your child.

Chad Mielens
Director of Bands, West Bloomfield High School
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About This Handbook

In this handbook you will learn what Marching Band is, and also learn the **philosophy, expectations** and **policies** of the West Bloomfield Marching Band program for both students and parents. This information will help you understand what it means to be a part of this ensemble and what kind of commitment is involved in joining the group. By signing the last page of this handbook you are confirming that you are 100% on board with the program and will fulfill your commitment to the ensemble.

Marching Band

Many students hold the opinion that of all of our ensembles, Marching Band is the most fun! It is also the singular opportunity in the West Bloomfield Band Department for beginner-level students to perform with the most experienced and musically fluent students in the program. We hope to instill a strong sense of perseverance, dedication, personal achievement, growth, self-confidence, music appreciation and work ethic through the pursuit of excellence.

Marching band is intended for all West Bloomfield School District students in grades 8-12 who have experience on wind or percussion instruments. It is highly recommended that students be concurrently enrolled in band class, but this requirement can be waived at the director's discretion.

Color Guard

Students who are not in band class and/or who do not play an instrument may join the Color Guard. Color Guard is a visual ensemble and an integral part of Marching Band shows. It is a combination of flag spinning maneuvers, rifle spinning, sabre spinning, marching and dancing to the marching band music. Some experience in dance is helpful but not required. The dance elements and equipment skills can be taught to interested students.

Performances

The Marching Band will perform at all home football games, the Homecoming Parade and game, Memorial Day parade, and several marching band competitions from September through the first half of November.

The Band Boosters Association of West Bloomfield (BBAWB)

The Band Boosters Association of West Bloomfield (BBAWB) seeks to support, encourage, and assist in the development, organization, and operations of the many aspects of the band program in the West Bloomfield School District. The BBAWB is an independent 501(c)3 organization which works closely with the band department and school administration. Funds raised by BBAWB are used to support and enhance all West Bloomfield Middle and High School band programs. The band programs depend on the financial support provided by the BBAWB, which is a direct reflection of enthusiastic parent involvement and participation.

Parents, when your child is a part of any of the West Bloomfield bands, you are automatically a member of the BBAWB. There are no membership dues, just an open invitation for you to participate and help out in the support of the programs whenever you can. As the saying goes, "many hands make light work" and this is very true of the BBAWB. The more participation we have from parents and supporters, the easier it is for everyone AND the better the experience for our children. Success for a high-caliber program like ours depends on the active involvement of our band families. Many band parents find their involvement to be one of their most rewarding experiences while their children are in school. We invite you to check it out! More information at wbbands.info/band-boosters/

What We've Learned as Marching Band Parents:

Marching Band is Different! It is different from any other activity that your student may have been involved with. It is a world unto itself, with its own language, rules and etiquette. Many first-time Marching Band parents, have no idea what to expect. Our veteran parents have put together some suggestions and pointers to pass on to other parents.

Attend Competitions and Home Football Games. Watch the shows and marvel at the improvement as the season progresses. Your students will appreciate the fact that you take the time to come to the events (whether they admit it or not). You will also discover how many thousands of other students and parents are involved in this thing called Competitive Marching Band.

Network with Other Parents. This will help you learn the ropes and will also make your life much easier, especially if you need to make ride sharing arrangements for practices or carpooling for competitions

Attend the monthly BBAWB Parent Meetings! If you come to meetings, you will discover things that your student has never mentioned (like upcoming fundraisers that help you pay for camp and trips). The Directors usually give status reports at each meeting. You will also find out about what is happening with the rest of the West Bloomfield High School Band Department. More information at wbbands.info/band-boosters/bbawb-meetings/.

Email – Your Next Best Friend. If you are not receiving e-mails from us, you should be! If not please notify the Secretary (secretary@wbbands.info) to get on our e-mail list. E-mail is the primary means to send out all kinds of information on the Marching Band including: details about each competition; fundraiser information; copies of all flyers the Directors give the students (most of which never seem to make it home) and more.

When in Doubt, Check the Website! The BBAWB posts a lot of valuable marching band information on its website (www.wbbands.info) including: dates, times and maps for all competitions; downloadable copies of important forms and documents, fund-raising information, up-to-date interactive calendar, and more.

CHARMS The BBAWB and the directors are now utilizing CHARMS Office Assistant. This is a web based data system which tracks all your students important information i.e. address, phone number parent information, uniform assignment, and student account balances. You should have already been sent information on how to access your account but if you didn't the information is available on our website. Please check in often and make necessary changes as quickly as possible. More information at charmsoffice.com or wbbands.info (click the blue "Charms" box on front page).

Program Philosophy

The West Bloomfield Marching Band has a unique philosophy for rehearsal and performance. It is simply stated:

BE YOUR BEST

Success, as we measure it, is striving to be the best we possibly can be, every day, every practice, and every performance. The only group we want to beat is our own performance of yesterday. In competitions, judges are simply people that put down numbers. They are trained in music or visual techniques but still have their personal preferences and opinions. No two people totally agree about performances, and judges certainly are no exception to this. Trophies and awards, when they happen, are “icing on the cake” and enjoyable, but they are not our goal. Our goal is to be the best that we can be and achieve excellence each and every day.

PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

Marching Band rules and expectations are based on one thing:

DO YOUR JOB

Everyone has a specific job and responsibility that they must fulfill in order for the program to be successful. “Doing your job” means doing what you’re supposed to do, when you’re supposed to do it, the way it’s supposed to be done, every time. Here are some examples:

1. **DO WHAT YOU’RE SUPPOSED TO DO:** Have your music memorized, have your drill memorized, be prepared, be respectful of yourself, others, the facilities, equipment, and uniforms.
2. **WHEN YOU’RE SUPPOSED TO DO IT:** Everything in our program has a time and a place. Show up to rehearsal early, be ready to start rehearsal on time, play your part when you’re supposed to, move when you’re supposed to, focus when you’re supposed to, ask questions when you’re supposed to, etc.
3. **THE WAY IT’S SUPPOSED TO BE DONE:** With class, pride, and precision; with great technique and performance quality.
4. **EVERY TIME:** Consistency is critical. If you can’t do what you’re supposed to do, when you’re supposed to do it, the way it’s supposed to be done during every repetition of rehearsal, it means you probably won’t be able to do it in a competition performance. We must behave and perform the way we’re supposed to during every rehearsal and performance.

If everyone in the program does their job, the Marching Band experience will be rewarding, enjoyable, and successful.

Also note, since this is a school organization, all West Bloomfield High School rules and regulations are in effect at all rehearsals, performances, and trips. Please refer to the WBHS Student Handbook.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

COMMITMENT: You have made a commitment to be in Marching Band for the season. Everyone in the group is counting on you. In order to have successful rehearsals and performances, it is essential that we have full attendance. The absence of one person not only affects that person, but also the entire group. The critical factors of uniformity, balance, precision, spacing and alignment cannot be improved or maintained with absences.

Rehearsals

GET THERE EARLY TO BE ON TIME: Students should arrive at the rehearsal location at least 15 minutes before rehearsal is scheduled to begin in order to get equipment, get to the right location, and be ready to start on time. Nothing frustrates the directors and instructors more than starting late. Some members may need to arrive more than 15 minutes early if they have an instrument or equipment that take more time to setup. If you are not at your instrument and ready to begin when the group is beginning, then you are considered tardy. Upon your first tardy, you will be given a verbal warning. Upon your second tardy, you shall meet with the band director. A third tardy will result in a meeting between the student's parents and the band director. Any further tardies may result in dismissal from the ensemble.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Marching Band is a commitment and an investment. It is a commitment to a group in an effort to achieve excellence and an investment in yourself to become the best that you can to develop life skills that will pay dividends in your personal and professional life for years to come.

Attendance is more than mere physical presence. Members are expected to be attentive to their respective director(s)/staff and participate in each and every rep, at each and every rehearsal. Students who are not paying attention or doing something other than what was specifically asked of them at rehearsal will received an unexcused absence and parents will be contacted.

Every single member of a competitive marching band is in the starting lineup, and contributes equally to the band's success. Every member of the ensemble also relies on the member next to them to be able to clean their drill, balance their sound, get their flags in sync and much more. One absence has a ripple effect on what the members around him/her are able to accomplish in that rehearsal.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCE: Unexcused absence from a *performance* is unacceptable and results in automatic dismissal from the ensemble. Unexcused absence from a *rehearsal* will result in removal from the next performance on the first offense. A second unexcused absence from rehearsal will result in automatic dismissal from the ensemble.

Running an hour or more late for practice shall be considered an unexcused absence.

Examples of unexcused absences include the following: Work, tiredness, homework, or vacations. Students who are physically present but "absent" because they are using their phones, daydreaming, leaving the rehearsal space without permission, doing homework or chatting out of turn with other members will receive an unexcused absence and their parent(s) will be contacted.

LEGITIMATE EXCUSES: Legitimate excuses for rehearsal absences are illness, accident/emergency, serious illness/death in the family, and doctor's appointments. A doctor's note or other documentation must be provided to the director. Students absent from school for illness must still communicate that absence, but it is automatically approved. You must contact Mr. Mielens at chad.mielens@wbsd.org at least 24 hours prior to an absence from a rehearsal or performance. A request to be excused from a future event must be turned in at least two weeks prior to the date and will be considered by the director, pending the legitimacy of the case presented.

All absences, and those that are late to rehearsal, must make up the missed rehearsal time with an instructor or section leader outside of our normal rehearsal time. This usually means coming to rehearsal early and working with an instructor or section leader.

ASK: If you are not sure or have a request, problem, or question, ask the director before the event occurs.

Bring to Rehearsal:

WATER BOTTLES: Every student MUST bring a water bottle to all rehearsals. This is especially important on Saturday and late summer practices. These students work very hard and need to keep plenty of fluids in their body.

Ankle and Knee Braces (if needed): Because students are marching almost every day, it is recommended for those individuals who have joint problems to wear ankle/knee braces where appropriate. Even if your student is healthy, these are a cheap insurance policy to prevent joint injuries.

SUMMER REHEARSALS

Pre-Band Mini Camps

Pre-Band Mini Camps will be held at the high school during the summer (see the Calendar and materials handed out regarding the rehearsal schedule) to learn the performance program.

Band Camp

Marching Band Camp Band Camp is a very important aspect of the Marching Band Program and is required for each Marching Band member. Time is spent under intensive instruction and supervision laying the foundation of the performance program.

Band camp is typically held in August. Band Camp is an overnight camp, and runs Monday to Friday. The director and Boosters will provide information on logistics, what to bring, and transportation to and from camp.

SATURDAY REHEARSALS AND COMPETITIONS

Typically, Saturday rehearsal and competition schedule lasts from 9am until 10pm. Fortunately, most students find Saturdays to be fun and rewarding, but please do not schedule them for other appointments or events on competitions days.

Meals: Competition days are long and unpredictable. Always pack a sack meal, depending on the day's schedule. One meal will be provided by the Boosters before we leave for invitationals. Students are not allowed to eat in uniform so do not plan for them to eat at the invitational site prior to competing. Lunch or dinner will be the responsibility of each student. Always bring a large water bottle. Students need to drink large amounts of water to avoid becoming dehydrated. Plan ahead!

Snacks: Students are encouraged to bring snacks, but keep in mind they may not be consumed on the bus or while in uniform.

Uniforms

Marching Band: Each student will be issued:

- shako (hat) and plume
- jacket
- black bibber pants
- black gloves
- gauntlets
- garment bag

New students will have to purchase Dinkles (marching band shoes) at an approximate cost of \$40. The jacket, pants, gauntlets, gloves and shoes MUST be kept in the garment bag in the band room. The shako (hat) MUST be kept in a shako box in the band room and the plume MUST be returned to the plume box in the band room.

Black Socks: Students are required to wear black, calf-length socks with their uniforms. It is very important that they are solid black socks, and do not have writing on them. Please reinforce with your children that they need to be prepared so they are not on a frantic hunt for socks 10 minutes before the call time. It is recommended that an extra pair of socks be tucked in with their uniform in their garment bag.

Color Guard: The costume is determined by the show for the season. The final decision for the costume is made by the Marching Band Director. The student must buy guard shoes and guard gloves at cost. Each student must provide dance socks or hose, make-up, and hair accessories. In addition, depending on the costume, the student may need to provide their own leotard. Accessories and flags for the Color Guard will be purchased by the Band Boosters.

Students will not be allowed to march unless in complete uniform!

No food or drinks (except water) may be consumed while in uniform!!

Students should dress under their uniforms according to the weather. In warm weather, students wear shorts and their Marching Band Pride T-shirt under their uniform. In cooler weather, students may wear long underwear (and thick socks) under their uniforms to stay warm. Jeans, sweatpants or other bulky clothes are not permitted.

Typical Uniform Issues to Avoid

- student forgets their black socks
- student wears blue jeans under their marching band pants which make the uniform look sloppy
- student forgets to pin up their hair so that it is not sticking out of their shako
- student didn't hang their marching band uniform up properly so it is wrinkled
- student lost a gauntlet and has to buy a new one.

Any student that loses any part of their marching band uniform must pay for its replacement cost. See the Uniform Contract for prices.

Performances

The Marching Band performs at home football games, in the Homecoming and Memorial Day parades, at Saturday competitions in the area, and, if the band qualifies, at State Finals at Ford Field.

Football Games

The Marching Band usually performs at all home football games, during halftime. The band sits and plays in the stands for both the first and second half of the game. With the exception of the Homecoming game, students will not practice on game days, students may stay after school to practice individually or with their section. Students are responsible for eating on their own. The Marching Band Director will announce any changes to the schedule in advance. Before the game begins (around 6:00 p.m.), the student must be in full uniform, get their instruments ready, and assemble outside in block formation for warm up and be ready to march onto the football field. Full uniform, except gloves and hat, must be kept on throughout the entire football game unless specifically directed by a Band Director. The band will sit at the far end of the "home" bleacher section (closest to the scoreboard) during the game. Students may not leave the bleacher section without permission from a Band Director. The marching band plays the school fight song as the football players run onto the field before each home game. They perform a half-time show. The band marches off the field in block formation at the end of the game, usually around 10:00 p.m.

No food or drink (except water) may be consumed while in uniform.

Please stay for the entire football game and support the marching band and football team. So many band parents come to the game that if we all leave after the halftime show, the stands will be empty (or at least half empty).

Parades

The band marches in the Homecoming and Memorial Day Parades. Pre-parade practices and call times will be announced. Students will march the parade route and play the school fight song and other songs, and march to cadences provided by the battery. Students who play in the front ensemble are invited to march. They can play their regular wind instrument (if they play one in class), help carry the banner, throw candy or play cymbals.

Saturday Competitions

There are usually several "sanctioned" competitions every weekend throughout the state. The Directors choose which events West Bloomfield will attend (we will not compete in more than one event per day). There is usually practice before a competition. The students will generally spend the entire day (and many times into the evening) with the band on competition days. The band, along with the chaperones, travel together on school buses.

Competitions are the Biggest Reason Your Kids Do This

The scores from competitions during the season determine which bands will go on to compete in the state finals. West Bloomfield has made the state finals and finished in the top twelve for the last 23 years.

How Many Bands Compete?

The size of the competition can range from just a few bands to events where dozens of bands compete. Bands compete in flights (see page 11) with all the bands from a specific flight competing in one set.

Arrive at Competitions Early

It takes time to find a parking place and get through the gates. It's a real bummer to go through all the trouble of getting to an event and then miss the band's performance. It's also fun to evaluate the bands in West Bloomfield's flight to see how your ratings compare to the judges. Plus, at the larger events, there are hundreds (and sometimes thousands) of

spectators. It's easiest to get a good seat before the flight starts. Some parents think the best seats are on the 50-yard line, higher in the stands (where you can see the band's formations).

Who Hosts the Local Competitions?

Each competition is hosted by a school and is usually held at the school's football field. The hosting band does not compete with the other schools for ranking but does give an exhibition performance. Students can purchase advance tickets for friends and family from designated Band Boosters. Programs are available for purchase at each Invitational. Many students like to collect them, and they are handy for keeping scores. Entry to the viewing stands is only allowed in between performances. The band will be centered at the 50 yard line, facing the "home" stands. The Invitational is called off only for thunder and lightning. Fall weather in Michigan means cold temperatures and frequent down pours. Rain gear and warm clothing is recommended (no umbrellas). All marching band students ride designated school buses with the group to and from competitions. Chaperones are provided by the Band Boosters. The parent or legal guardian of any student not riding the bus home from any competition must contact the director at chad.mielens@wbsd.org prior to the event day. The student and parent must also check out with the head chaperone before leaving the event. A detailed schedule with the address of the competition is posted on the West Bloomfield Bands website (www.wbbands.info) one to two weeks before the competition. The detailed schedule cannot be posted before that, because we do not get performance time information more than two weeks before a competition. The most common situation is a rehearsal starting at 9AM at WBHS and then a performance time in the late afternoon or evening.

Competition Costs

The usual admission price for a marching band competition is \$7-8 for per person. Tickets can be purchased from BBAWB before the event, but we usually only get 25 presale tickets per event (the profit from all ticket sales goes to the school hosting the competition NOT to BBAWB). The hosting band will have a concession stand where you can purchase snacks and drinks. They will also provide a program for spectators to purchase. In addition to listing the bands in the competition, the program generally will provide a little information on each of the bands and their shows. You can also track the judging scores and it makes a great souvenir. The dollars you spend help to support the marching band at the school. Admission to watch the Regional, State Finals and Nationals is significantly more.

Competition Weather

Bands do perform (and rehearse) in the sun, wind, rain and snow. The experienced parents go to the competitions prepared to sit through unpleasant weather and cheer for all the bands. Rain gear and ponchos are better than umbrellas (which tend to block the view of the shows and cause rivers of rain to run on the laps of people behind you) . If it rains during a competition, the bands may still need to march in the mud (although most of our competitions are on artificial turf). If the field conditions are poor, the band may do a standstill performance on the track or in the gym.

Awards

Awards are based on total points. At the end of a performance (or at the end of an individual flight, depending on size of the competition) the drum majors and color guard captains from the competing bands enter the field in a processional. The score and ranking of each band is announced (beginning with the lowest score). Awards are presented to each band. In addition to the ranking, awards are also given for best marching, best music and best general effect. The scores from all the competitions are posted on Michigan Competing Bands Association/MCBA's website each week (www.themcba.org). If you really get into this, you can track the other bands in West Bloomfield's flight and see how the Lakers rank throughout the season.

Spectator Etiquette

When attending competitions, try to sit with other WBHS parents. Wear your marching band t - shirt/sweatshirt if you have one. Yell, cheer and clap at appropriate times during the show (no cowbells or air horns). Be loud, but respectful to

other bands. West Bloomfield is proud to have an outstanding, supportive audience. Do not enter/exit the stands during anyone's performance. Do not talk during any show (remember, you may be sitting next to another parent whose child is performing). Stand and applaud every band as they leave the field. Remember, the students in the other bands have worked just as hard as our own students. They deserve our respect and applause. Regardless of how you may feel about the judge's decision, bite your tongue! Every parent and every band member performing feels his or her band should be number one. Remember, every marching band member in every band is participating in an activity that teaches him or her teamwork, respect and pride in what they do. There are no losers in this activity.

Band Classification and Judging

Taken from MCBA website www.themcba.org

In November of each year, MCBA member bands are divided into four equal flights of competition based upon school size (total number of students), not band size. For the last 20+ years, West Bloomfield has been classified as a Flight I school.

MCBA Flights of Competition

- Flight I 1510 – higher
- Flight II 1081 – 1509
- Flight III 681 – 1080
- Flight IV 680 - lower

Scoring

MCBA currently utilizes the Bands of America judging system, which uses seven adjudicators and has the following scoring system:

- Music Field Judge – 10% of the total score
- Music Ensemble Judge – 20% of the total score
- Visual Field Judge – 10% of the total score
- Visual Ensemble Judge – 20% of the total score
- Music General Effect Judge – 20% of the total score
- Visual General Effect Judge – 20% of the total score
- Total possible points - 100

Judges

MCBA hires judges from throughout the United States and Canada. It hires people who have had extensive training as judges and who are affiliated with nationally known judging organizations such as:

- Drum Corps International
- Bands of America
- Winter Guard International

MCBA also hires other judges that have undergone training and testing, successfully completed field training, maintained judging skills, and kept abreast of current knowledge and trends. Some judges will observe from the press box at competitions and others will be on the field while the band performs.

Some judges may stop directly in front of your child to hear if he/she is playing the music. You will observe the judges speaking into tape recorders during the performance.

The director of the band shares the judge's remarks with the students for them to better understand what areas of the show need to be improved or changed. In addition, most performances are videotaped by an independent individual and these tapes are also shared with the students.

Common Terms and What They Mean

Listening to marching band staff, students and parents talk can sometimes feel like you are listening to a foreign language. Below is our attempt to define some of the commonly used terms.

Battery (Drum Line): These are the snare drums, bass drums, etc. that are carried and played while marching.

Color Guard (Guard): These students move with the music, often display flags or colorful props, add visual excitement to the total presentation. In some shows, they enact the stories and may be dressed to fit the roles.

Competition (Invitational): This is an event where bands are judged and ranked in groups called flights. Specific areas are being judged. The printed programs explain the specifics of judging and the points awarded to each. Be warned: What may appeal to the spectators may not impress the judges. Only one band in each flight will be awarded first place.

Competitive Band: This is a band that participates in competitions.

Drill: This refers to the formations the band makes and the movement from one form to another. It's the MARCHING part of the program. Changes are made to the drill throughout the season. The drill in the final show will be very different from the drill that was learned in August.

Drum Major: This student (or students) is second in command (behind the director). This person directs the band for the show and is given authority to make many decisions. All band members are expected to follow his/her leadership. West Bloomfield has two drum majors. Drum Major auditions are held each spring to select a replacement for the graduating senior.

Flight: This is the term used in competition to group bands. Groupings are determined by school size, NOT band size. West Bloomfield is in Flight I.

Instructors: These additional adults work with individual sections of the band at practices and/or sectionals, and at competitions. They are chosen for their outstanding accomplishments in their respective areas.

MCBA: The Michigan Competing Bands Association is the organization that sponsors competitions throughout the state. We are competing at several MCBA sanctioned events this year.

The Front Ensemble (Pit): The students in the front ensemble play instruments that are stationary (often in the front of the band or toward the sideline). They may be on raised platforms or even movable platforms. The front ensemble often includes marimba, vibraphone, drum set, rack percussion, synthesizer, guitar, and bass guitar.

Pit Crew: These are the very important volunteers that quickly assemble the drum major's podium, props and front ensemble instruments for every performance. After the show, the pit crew is responsible for quickly removing all these items from the field. The show is timed and the pit crew plays a vital part with their speed and accuracy to help the band avoid penalty points. Each band has four minutes to set up and only three minutes to exit the field. The Pit Crew also plays a large role in the construction of any props that are used during the show. If you would like to be a member of the "Pit Crew", contact the director.

Section Leader: This is usually an upperclassman from each instrument section of the band. In the guard, this position is called the captain. This person makes sure his/her section is following instructions and is achieving what the drum majors and directors expect. This is a position of authority and requires maturity and strong leadership skills.

Sectionals: These are practice sessions with members of the same instrument group.

Shako: This is the hat that the marching band members wear.

Show: This is the performance that the marching band does for competition. It usually is based around a theme, a composer, a type of music or a story. We perform, perfect and add to the same show all season.

Show Shirt: This is a shirt that is sold by BBAWB that has our show theme on the front and our competition schedule on the back. Most parents wear their show shirt to competitions to show their support of the band.

State Finals: The MCBA end-of-the-season championship competition usually held at Ford Field. A band must earn points in local competitions in order to qualify to compete in these finals. Only twelve bands from each flight are invited to "State Finals".

Tag Day: One of the Marching Band's biggest annual fund raisers. Band members stand in front of local businesses and solicit donations for the band. Each band student is expected to work at least one 3 -hour shift for this event, which usually takes place the Friday, Saturday and Sunday before band camp.

Volunteer: A person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task; a person who works for an organization without being paid.

Winds: These students play brass or woodwind instruments. This includes everyone but the Guard, Front ensemble, Battery and Drum Majors.

Acknowledgement

After reading all of the content within this packet, please sign the contract on this page, detach, and submit to Mr. Mielens no later than May 15. You will not be allowed to rehearse without a signed Marching Band Handbook acknowledgement (online registrants must check the box acknowledging this document).

West Bloomfield High School Marching Band Contract

By joining this group, I, _____, read and understand this Handbook and have received and read the forms policies related to Marching Band registration.

- I understand the role I will play in this upcoming season.
- I am committing myself to excellence and to the ensemble and will prove to be a vital part of this organization.
- I am able to commit financially to the fee schedule provided.
- I understand and agree that any fees that I pay are non-refundable.
- I will adhere to the attendance policy.
- I agree to follow the West Bloomfield Bands Parent Code of Conduct as well as the policies of the West Bloomfield School District.

Both parents must sign this document, unless there is a court order granting custody to just one parent.

Date: _____

Student Name (please print clearly): _____ **Signature:** _____

Parent/Guardian Name (please print clearly): _____ **Signature:** _____

Parent/Guardian Name (please print clearly): _____ **Signature:** _____