

# **The Bearcat Bands**



**Wheeler High School  
Union Township Middle School**

**2013 - 2014**

**Band Handbook**

# BEARCAT BANDS



Union Township School Corporation

John VanPatten, Director

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Dear 2013-2014 Bearcat Band Member

Welcome to another year of school! We have a lot of fun and exciting things planned this year and I hope you are ready to get started. I am really looking forward to accomplishing a lot this year, and I hope you are too.

Please take a few minutes to read over the handbook. Familiarize yourself with the policies and procedures of the program (yes, even you too, high schoolers). Keep this handbook to refer back to throughout the year. A lot of what is in here is not really anything you need to know on a daily basis, but items you may need to be aware of throughout the year. If you would prefer not to keep a paper version, you can download a .pdf version from the "Documents" page on our website. The URL is at the bottom of this page.

As an ever-evolving teacher, I endeavor to make improvements on policies and procedures from year to year. Being in my sixth year there are things I have figured out and things I am still learning. There are bound to be changes in here from last year, so please read carefully and note those changes.

If you are new to this program (either as a new student or a beginning 6th grade band student) we would like to welcome you! In the past few years this program has undergone a lot of changes and improvements, and we have established somewhat of an expectation of excellence. All I ask is that everyone try their very best in everything they do and together we can achieve greatness. You have a very large group of students that have a common interest with you, so do not hesitate to lean on them for support. Everyone in the program values everyone else, and relies on everyone else to do their part. Help each other out, give each other the encouragement they need, and we will do great things together.

Please look through this handbook in detail and keep it as a reference throughout the year. As always, if you need anything at any time, please don't hesitate to contact me. Let's have a great year together!!

Yours In Music,

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Union Township Middle School  
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## **Policy Statement**

All policies stated in this handbook are in addition to those found in the WHS and UTMS student handbooks. These are simply guidelines for the smooth and efficient operation of the Bearcat Band Program. Please read through this at the beginning of the year and hold on to it for reference throughout the year. A copy can be found on our website under “Documents”.

### **WHS/UTMS Band Policies**

#### **Accounts**

Students are to be responsible for paying for certain items and fees associated with being in band. Things like reeds, books, entrance fees (ISSMA for example) will be kept track of. Failure to pay for these items will result in a debt slip being issued by the school. If you need to stay up to date on your balance please ask and I will be more than happy to let you know. Statements will be issued regularly.

#### **Announcements**

Throughout the year I will have important announcements that need to be made. I will make every attempt to make these announcements in as many places as possible. They will be: written on the board, posted on a bulletin board, emailed to parents through Harmony, posted on our website, and posted to our Facebook and Twitter accounts. My hope is that these announcements are made in at least one form that you will check on a regular basis.

#### **Attendance**

All band related events listed on the calendar (and ones that may be added later) are **required** events. That means that your grade will be adversely effected if you choose not to participate in them. (Conflicts with other events will be addressed later in the handbook) As soon as you learn of an absence you must fill out the “Request an Absence” form on the website. This form **MUST** be submitted **NO LATER** than **ONE WEEK** before the event you are going to miss. If you do not submit this, you will be counted unexcused and will receive a zero for that event. If you make satisfactory arrangements with me, I will allow you to make up all of the points through service work (options are listed on the “Request an Absence” form).

Events like playing in the Pit Orchestra for the Musical are considered volunteer activities. I cannot penalize your grade for failing to participate in a volunteer activity. It is understood at the time you volunteer that you will be at all rehearsals and performances. If there will be significant conflicts, then please do not volunteer.

#### **Awards**

Here are the awards the band department presents:

**John Philip Sousa Award** - Outstanding High School Senior

**Patrick Gilmore Award** - Outstanding High School Junior

**Marching Award** - Outstanding High School Junior or Senior from the Marching Band;

**Rookie of the Year** - Outstanding High School Freshmen/New Member

**Most Improved Member** - One for High School, one for each Middle School Band

**Outstanding Member** - One for each Middle School Band

**Director's Award** - Outstanding Eighth Grade Student

**High School Letters/Chevrons** - High school students are eligible for a letter after completing six trimesters (two full years) of band. These letters are issued at the end of the school year. Students also have the option of adding the following items to their jackets: music notes, ensemble patches (concert, jazz, pep bands, color guard, drum major), and chevrons (one for every three trimesters of band). These are items that you may purchase on your own, so feel free to add them to your jacket or collection at your discretion. Letters will be provided by the band department.

### **Communication**

I fully believe that good communication is the key to the success of any program. I will do my best to constantly keep parents, students, and the community up to date with information. Please do not hesitate to contact me at anytime with any questions or concerns. You can see your grade online at anytime via Harmony. You can also visit the Band program's website via the WHS Home Page, or at [www.bearcatbands.com](http://www.bearcatbands.com). Anything that is given out to students on Bearcat Band Letterhead needs to be taken home and shared with parents. It will also need to be signed and returned. Copies of these letters can be found on the website, usually on the Announcements page. All UTMS Students will be required to bring their Agendas to class this year, so as to convey important information to parents.

### **Concerts**

All concerts are held on either Tuesdays or Thursdays at 7:00 PM in the Auditorium. Specific dates can be found on the annual calendar. If there is an exception to this you will be informed as soon as possible. Students are required to be on stage ready to warmup at 6:00. We will warmup from 6:00 to 6:30, at which time the doors will be open to the public. If you are not in attendance promptly at 6:00 for warmups, you will receive a reduction of 10% of your concert grade. All concerts are worth 100 points.

### **Concert Dress**

How a group looks will effect how the group performs. That is why I believe in having uniform concert dress at all concerts. For all concert band groups, all students will wear "white on top and black on bottom"; that is, a white shirt of some kind (no logos or designs; no t-shirts) with a black bottom (pants, not jeans, or a skirt of appropriate length), black socks and black shoes (no tennis shoes, no flip flops, must be all black). Jazz band will dress in all black, as will all pit orchestras. Marching band students will wear summer or full uniforms. I reserve the right to not allow you to perform on any performance of any kind if I deem your dress to be inappropriate concert attire.

### **Contests**

Our bands participate in several ISSMA contests throughout the year. These contests are very important as we are performing for the music community in this area, as well as receiving comments from highly qualified judges. Dress for contests is the same as for concerts, and it is even more important to comply with this as we are judged on our appearance. Contests are worth 200 points.

**Discipline**

I have found that band students tend to be the “cream of the crop”. However, we do have rules in place to ensure the proper conduct of students. All school rules apply while in the band room at anytime, and all school disciplinary procedures will be followed.

**Equipment**

The equipment that is in the band room is all very expensive, and very hard to repair or replace. It is of the utmost importance that all students respect the equipment that we use on a daily or yearly basis as we will be unable to just “get a new one”. If any student is caught disrespecting the equipment in anyway, disciplinary actions will be taken to the fullest extent possible.

**Event Conflicts**

I am very pleased that band students tend to be active in more than one organization (outside clubs, sports, etc.) I fully support and encourage this! However, if you are going to do both band and other activities you must be willing to make concessions. As a general rule, “Concerts overrule practices, and games overrule rehearsals.” In all other circumstances, I will talk with the student and the other supervisor/coach. Arrangements will be made on a **CASE BY CASE BASIS**. Precedents will not be made.

**Fundraising**

The music and fine arts departments participate in many different fundraisers throughout the year. We do not get a lot of money from the school, so it is our job to raise funds for our specific needs. The money raised through these sales go directly to serve the needs of the students. If you do not sell anything or do not participate in fundraisers, you will not have the things you need. The results are directly related to the amount of effort you put into the fundraisers.

**Instrument Requirements**

Everyone in the band program, from 6th grade through 12th grade, is required to play an instrument. That requires having the following items at all rehearsals:

All Students - Music, Pencil, Binder (concert groups)

Flute - cleaning cloth, tuning rod, cork grease

Oboe/Clarinet/Saxophone - at least 3 working reeds, cleaning cloth, cork grease

Trumpet/French Horn/Trombone/Baritone/Tuba - valve oil/slide oil, cleaning supplies

Percussion - drum sticks (your own pair); mallets will be provided in school only

**Homework Trays**

The trays located outside of the band office are for you to turn in anything to me. I always tell students that I tend to forget things, the trays don't! The trays are organized by band level, not class period, so please make sure you turn things into the proper trays. If they are not, they will not be counted. The top tray is reserved for extra copies of handouts and other items passed out in class. If you miss something, check the top tray first.

### **Lockers**

Lockers will be provided for students to store their instruments and music in. Anything else must be kept in your school locker. Students are not allowed to share lockers or give their combinations out. **PLEASE** keep your lock with your locker. This is the only way I can keep the combinations organized. If you deliberately damage a locker you will be charged to replace it, which can get costly. Any student seen climbing in any locker will be dealt with severely.

### **Music Storage**

All concert music will be kept in folder slots (rack or closet). At the beginning of the year all students will be required to provide their own **black** 1” 3-ring binder, as well as a pencil that will be kept in the folders at all times. Students will receive only copies of all music and you must have your music with you at every rehearsal. If you loose music, it is your responsibility to let me know so that I can copy it for you. Excessive loss of music will result in a detention.

### **“QandF” Board**

We have a Quinlan and Fabish Representative that stops by once a week. His name is Brian Fine and he is wonderful at his job. If you ever need anything from him you can put it on the “QandF” board (small bulletin board next to the double doors). When he comes by I can take that week’s sheet off and simply give it to him. That saves me from remembering what you needed and helps to get your needs taken care of quickly and efficiently.

### **Private Lessons**

We are proud to host Mr. Bill Theis as our in-house private lessons teacher. He will be available during the week (1 or 2 days depending on the level of interest and his availability). Lessons will be given during your scheduled band class (or during resource for WHS students). His rate is \$15 per lesson, which is a discount of his usual rate. Sign ups will be conducted at the beginning of the year on a first-come-first-served basis. Please be sure to bring money to your lessons. If financial problems become an issue, please speak with either myself or Mr. Theis.

### **Repairs**

No musician ever goes without a repair to their instrument. Damage happens, it’s a fact of life. There are some things that I can repair here, but there are some things that just have to be fixed at the repair shop. If damage occurs that I cannot fix, the student is required to take their instrument to Quinlan and Fabish to get it fixed. Whenever you take an instrument in to get fixed they will give you a loaner instrument to play until it is fixed. This will be the student’s responsibility. If there are financial problems they will be dealt with on an individual basis.

### **Resource and Lunch Periods (WHS Only)**

Students will not be allowed to eat lunch in the band room during resource and lunch. First resource hour is typically reserved for rehearsal times (color guard, jazz band, extra rehearsals, etc.), and my middle school students start their first class of the afternoon halfway through second resource hour.

### **School Owned Instruments**

All students using UTSC instruments must fill out a rental contract at the beginning of their rental term. These instruments are free to use, but any damage that is caused to it while in your care is your responsibility. You are also responsible for providing any necessary supplies for that instrument (reeds, mouthpieces, cleaning supplies, lubricants, etc.)

### **Social Media**

The Band program has many different outlets for social media available for you to follow. First and foremost is our website, with a very easy address to remember: [www.bearcatbands.com](http://www.bearcatbands.com). We also have a Facebook fan page (“Wheeler High School Bearcat Band”, although I post about all grades on this page), a Twitter account (“bearcat\_bands”), an Instagram account for pictures (“bearcatbands”), and a YouTube channel (“youtube.com/bearcatbandandguard”, although again I post videos from all groups). Please know that only myself and Mrs. VanPatten have administrative access to these accounts. Students may comment on content posted by me, but only I can upload content.

### **Solo/Ensemble Contest**

All UTMS Students are required to participate in Solo/Ensemble. This is held at Valparaiso High School in late January/early February. It is also open to any interested WHS student. Solos are \$12 and ensembles are \$6/member. These fees maybe paid for out of your fundraising profits. Dress is a minimum of concert dress, but you may choose to wear nicer clothing if you have it. Soloists wishing to have a piano accompanist must make arrangements with them in a timely manner. I am available to accompany a small group of students, but I reserve the right to limit the number of students I will take on.

### **Student Aides (“Band Aides”, WHS only)**

I love to have students aide for me. If you have time for a study hall in your schedule, I think your time would be better spent as an aide. Most of the time I will not have anything for you to do, so it will be like a study hall. However, if I do have something that needs to be done I expect you to do it. Aides can be canceled and put back into study hall if need be.

### **Technology**

If you know me, then you know I love to use technology. As with the other equipment, though, it is very expensive to replace and almost impossible to repair. I know that students also love using technology, so if you wish to continue using it, you must respect it as if it were your own, because if you break anything it will become your responsibility to replace it. A lot of what we use is my own personal equipment, so please respect it.

### **Transportation Policy**

We will take several trips throughout the year. These trips are planned far in advance so that we can arrange for school transportation. All students will travel with the band at all times. You will depart school with the band, and you will return to school with the band. If you are going to be transported by any other means, I must have a note from all parents involved **NO LATER THAN 5 SCHOOL DAYS BEFORE THE EVENT.** I will not allow you to leave with anyone other than myself if these arrangements have not been satisfied.

### **Marching Band Uniforms (WHS only)**

Participation in the marching band requires that you use our uniforms. We will be wearing them for all marching band performances, so it is your responsibility to keep them organized and clean. Any damage to a uniform will be charged to you, and you will be required to pay for any replacements.

While in uniform there is a certain conduct that I expect from you.

1. We will wear all parts of our uniform at all times during football games. I **never** want to see jackets undone or pants unstrapped during the 3rd quarter. If the weather warrants it, I will make the decision to take our jackets off, not you.
2. I will tell you when you can take your hats off. If we do take them off, place them in a safe spot and keep track of them so you know which one is yours.
3. If we are carrying our hats, they will be carried in the left hand with the bill of the hat in the palm and the eagle facing outward.
4. While in uniform you are required to conduct yourself in a manner that is befitting of the uniform. This means no cursing, no spitting, and no cell phones (especially during games).

### **Grading**

Group Performances (Concerts/Contests) - 35%

Individual Performances (Playing Tests and Quizzes) - 35%

Written Work (Practice Assignments, Worksheets, Take Home Sheets) - 20%

Class Participation (5 points daily) - 10 %

Again, you can see your grade at any time on Harmony. I will try to update them on a weekly basis. Please stay up to date with your grade. If you or your parents ever have any questions about your grades, please contact me.

### **Band Binders (All Concert Band Groups)**

All concert band students will be required to provide your own **BLACK** 1-inch 3-ring binder.

You will also need 5 tabbed dividers for the following sections:

1. Handouts - parent letters, information, this handbook, etc.
2. Take-Home - Weekly take-home sheets
3. Assignments - Worksheets and other written work
4. Exercises - Daily Studies, Scales, other exercises
5. Concert Music

You must also keep a pencil in here at all times. Not having a pencil in class will cost you one participation point. If you keep forgetting a pencil, you will be issued a detention.

## Wheeler High School/Union Township Middle School Performing Ensembles

### WHS Marching Band - The Bearcat Band and Guard

Open to: All High School Students; must sign up for 1st trimester HS band

Plays at: All home football games; Valparaiso Popcorn Festival; Fall Concert; Invitationals; ISSMA Scholastic Marching Band Competition

Rehearsal Schedule: Rehearsals are during 3rd hour band class; 2 week Band Camp is required before school begins in August. Additional rehearsals scheduled on the annual calendar.

### WHS Pep Band

Open to: All High School Students and 7th/8th Grade Students

Plays at: All home basketball games, both boys and girls

Rehearsal Schedule: Rehearsals will be conducted before each game; Call time is 90 minutes before scheduled tip off

### WHS Concert Band

Open to: All High School Students (8th grade students may be invited if necessary)

Plays at: Christmas Concert, Winter Concert, ISSMA Concert Band Contest, Spring Concert

Rehearsal Schedule: 1st hour band class 2nd and 3rd Trimester; optional after school rehearsals may be called if necessary

### WHS Jazz Ensemble

Open to: All High School Students

Instrumentation: Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Bari Saxophone, Flute, Clarinet, Trumpet, Trombone, Piano, Bass, Drums, Guitar, Vibes, Aux. Percussion

Plays At: Fall Concert, Christmas Concert, Winter Concert, ISSMA Jazz Festival, Spring Concert, other area Jazz Festivals

Rehearsal Schedule: First Resource (when "Tutoring" is scheduled)

### UTMS Bands

Open to: 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students

Plays at: Fall Concert, Christmas Concert, ISSMA Solo/Ensemble Festival, ISSMA Concert Band Contest, Spring Concert

Rehearsal Schedule: Most rehearsals are during school; after school rehearsals will be called when combining 7th and 8th grade bands

### \*UTMS Jazz Band

Open to: 7th and 8th grade students

Instrumentation: Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Bari Saxophone, Flute, Clarinet, Trumpet, Trombone, Piano, Bass, Drums, Guitar, Vibes, Aux. Percussion

Plays at: Christmas Concert, Winter Concert, ISSMA Jazz Festival, Spring Concert

Rehearsal Schedule: TBD

\*Optional this year, depending on the level of interest

## **Band Room Rules**

These are a few short, simple rules that we need to live by on a daily basis. While the handbook is simply for you to keep as a reference, these are rules that you need to know by heart.

- 1) There is to be no talking while Mr. VanPatten is on the podium. If you have a question, raise your hand.
- 2) While Mr. VanPatten's baton is in the air, your instrument should be up and in playing position. This includes percussion.
- 3) For all rehearsals you must have the following three items:
  - 1) Your instrument
  - 2) Your binder
  - 3) A pencil
- 4) When coming into class take the following steps:
  - 1) Come into the classroom quietly and look at the rehearsal order on the board.
  - 2) Go to your locker and get your instrument.
  - 3) Go to the storage rack and get your binder.
  - 4) Sit down in your seat and warmup on your own. Attendance and other daily items will be taken care of at this time.
- 5) All students are required, at all times, to maintain a positive attitude and to HAVE FUN!! THAT'S AN ORDER!!! :o)

### Order of Consequences

1. Warning - One participation point will be taken away.
2. 2nd Warning - Two participation points will be taken away.
3. All participation points will be taken away.
4. Detention.
5. Office referral and parent conference.

**Band Student Contract**

This page will need to be signed and returned to Mr. VanPatten no later than Friday August 23rd. It is important that both students and parents understand these policies in order to maintain an efficient and organized program. Please initial in each box and sign below.

*Parent Initials*

*Student Initials*

I understand that I am a valued part of the band that I play in, and that I will contribute to my fullest extent in every way possible.

I will communicate any absences or tardies to required events to Mr. VanPatten via the Bearcat Bands website in a timely fashion.

I agree to provide all necessary materials at all rehearsals and performances, including instrument, music, binder, pencil, and proper concert dress (when needed)

I have read and understand all the policies contained in this handbook as they pertain to the Bearcat Band program, and agree to be held accountable to them.

I have reviewed the Bearcat Band program's 2013-2014 calendar of events and agree to be present and on time for each of them.

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Student Name

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Student Signature

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Date

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Parent Signature