**Westside High School Band**

**SURVIVAL GUIDE**

**2025-2026 Marching Band Season**

**An opportunity to learn, live, and love music.**

This “Band Survival Guide” contains a large amount of important information that you need in order to participate in the Band program. ***Please take the time to read through the following information***. It answers A LOT of frequently asked questions. Once you have finished reviewing the information contained in this document, please sign the “2025-2026 Band Contract” document and fill out all the included forms. These forms MUST be turned in to the band director in order for your child to participate in the Westside Patriot Band.

**What is the Westside Band Program?**

The Westside Band program offers students of all abilities an opportunity to learn, live and love music. The Westside Band program has performance groups including Concert Band, Auxiliary Dance/Flag Line, Marching Band, Drumline and Jazz Band.

**What is the Marching Band Schedule?**

Marching Band camp will be held in two different weeks at the end of July.

After school starts, there will be three afternoon practices each week with football games on Fridays in the fall. Practices will be on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 2:30-6. Study hall will be on Wednesday before practice from 2:15-3:15. There **WILL** be band practice the first week of school. The Westside Marching Band also performs in a number of local parades throughout the year as well as other community events. All practices, games and parades are **MANDATORY**.

**Where can I get the Marching Band Music?**

Music is passed out at the first rehearsal and then new music is added throughout the year. Students are expected to keep up with their music throughout the season. If you need music, you are to see your section leader or the librarian.

**Is Marching Band Required?**

YES. If you are not enrolled in an activity that interferes with marching band, yes, it is required. This includes but is not limited to Softball, Volleyball, ROTC, VARSITY Football, VARSITY Cheerleading. You CAN participate in marching band if you are involved in these activities, but it is optional.

**I heard that Marching Band is tough.**

Yes, marching band is physically and mentally challenging, but also a lot of fun! Marching band is a great way for freshmen to make new friends, and become familiar with the school. It eases the transition from middle to high school. Students never forget the exhilaration of that first night performing to a cheering crowd under the lights!

**What do I need for marching band camp and rehearsals**

We try to avoid the mid-day sun and heat, but we WILL be outside.

The following are required:

* TENNIS SHOES!!!!!
* Blue, Red or Black Shorts
* White Shirts
* Sunglasses
* Hats
* Water Bottle
* Sunscreen

**When do I get my uniforms?**

Band members will be issued two different uniforms.

* Marching Band Uniform: (This belongs to the school)
	+ Marching Band Uniforms fittings occur during band camp.
	+ Jacket, Bibbers (Pants), Cape, Shako (Hat), Plum (Feathers, given out and taken back up after each performance)
* Track Suit Apparel: (This is purchased by you and belongs to you) Please make sure your name is labeled on all items.
	+ Track Suit $125
	+ Marching Shoes **$50**
	+ White Spats (2 Pair) $25
	+ All apparel costs $200

**Uniform Rental/Maintenance Agreement:**

Students agree that the Marching Uniforms and Tracksuits are to be worn at performances designated by the band director. Anyone not in appropriate uniform will not be allowed to participate.

* Marching Band Uniform fittings will occur during band camp. Students will be issued a numbered uniform inside of a uniform garment bag. Uniforms must be hung properly at all times. Every effort will be made to fit uniforms to our students; occasional hemming is the responsibility of the parent. Care/maintenance of the MB Uniforms is the responsibility of the students. Uniforms will be checked back into the band no later than May 1, 2024. Students should NOT turn in uniforms as a ‘favor’, nor leave uniforms on any chair, or in a changing room. Failure of another student to return YOUR uniform is YOUR responsibility. If you do not turn in your uniform by this date, you will have a $368 charge on your student fees. The fee will be removed when the uniform is turned in. If your uniform is returned without a cleaning tag, you will be charged a $15 cleaning fee. **Uniforms are NOT machine washable.** You can take your uniform to any local cleaner for cleaning, it costs between $10-15 depending on where you go. I recommend having your uniform cleaned at least 3-4 times a season. The Band Fee does **NOT** cover dry cleaning and general maintenance such as replacement of buttons, zippers and snaps. It does NOT include the repair of rips, tears or extra dry cleaning which may be due to carelessness or negligence. The cost for any additional maintenance will be based on the actual repair of cleaning expenses and is the responsibility of the student/parent. Uniforms are worth $368 per set. Fees will be charged for any missing items according to the following list:
	+ MB Jacket $150.00
	+ MB Pants $102.00
	+ MB Cape $63.00
	+ MB Gauntlet $53.00

**Should I upgrade my instrument?**

YES! Students often find their beginner line instruments inadequate for their level of musicianship at high school. PLEASE do not go off and purchase any instrument without consulting with Mrs. Colón. While you might get excited about finding a really cheap instrument online, it may not be worth the money you are spending. I am REALLY good at finding instruments for a good price.

**Instrument Rental**

This applies only to students who borrow a school-owned instrument. There is a small cost to borrow an instrument from the Westside Band Program. This is to help cover normal wear and tear of the instrument. The cost is $50. It is encouraged to rent or purchase your instrument from one of the local dealers. Rented/Purchased instruments are usually a much better quality and are covered for repairs if rented. The Instrument Rental (Borrow) Contract form will be handed out by Mrs. Colón. We will begin to collect contracts during band camp and will continue after school starts. Instruments will NOT be distributed to take home until the contract has been turned in. Parents are responsible for repairs to broken instruments (with the exception of drum heads and mallets/sticks...hence the percussion fee listed below).

**What does it cost to participate?**

Unfortunately, it costs a lot of money to keep this program running. All costs are kept as low as possible for the individual so that we can have everything possible for our program.

* Apparel: $200 for uniforms (Can be broken down if a returning student needs to order individual parts)
* Band Dues: $100

Breakdown of dues:

* New Marching Band Students: $300
* Returning Band Students: $100

**How are payments made?**

The Instrument Fee can be paid to the WHS Band Booster: Cash, Checks and Money Orders are accepted. We also accept CashApp & Zelle. At the bottom of this will be a link for those options. Band payments are to be turned in to Ms. Colón during hours of the school being in operation. This is so that it can be turned into the office for security reasons. Students may come to Mrs. Colón first thing in the morning so they do not have to carry it around during the school day. If you are paying through CashApp or Zelle please make sure that you notate your student’s name and what you are paying for.

Ex: Brandi Colon’s Uniform & Travel Fees.

**Adopt a Band Student**

Each year there are a percentage of students in our Band program who just cannot afford to pay for the required band fees. The number of students requiring assistance has increased in the past several years due to the economy. Please consider a tax-deductible donation to help “adopt” a band student. If you need financial help with dues, please let me know so that I can point you in the right direction to become an “adopted” band student.

**Transportation, Overnight Lodging and/or Meal Expenses:**

Transportation fees will be given out on our list of trips we are taking. They will be listed on the calendar of events with the amount that it costs. Students who do not pay for these events will not be able to attend. We will do fundraisers to help pay for this. Transportation, lodging and/or meal fees may be assessed for long-distance/late-evening band events. Accommodations for overnight trips generally include four students per room to reduce expenses. ***Students will be provided with ample opportunities for fundraising to offset trip costs.*** The only overnight trip that is planned at this time will be in January for JanFest at UGA and this is an Audition based event that you have to sign up for. More information will come for this at a later date.

**Are there fundraising opportunities?**

There are many fundraising opportunities throughout the year. Students active in fundraising build fundraising account balances that cover the costs of trips and some of their band fees. All students are expected to participate in general band fundraising. Those who find it difficult to pay band fees are encouraged to fundraise as much as possible to help offset the cost of the fees.

**Can I mix academics, sports, and band?**

The class schedule at Westside High School is made to allow students to take a full schedule of classes (including AP) and play in one of the bands during all four years, and participate in sports. Some sports are easier to work around than others. Since we have several ‘levels’ of band, we are usually able to place you in the appropriate band to make things work, so you can enjoy athletics and band during your high school career.

**How can I get involved?**

The need for volunteers continues even through the High School years. With the number of kids involved in the Westside HS Band Program, you can only imagine that it takes quite a few people to help coordinate an event. Fortunately, along with the great many talented musicians in the program, we have a great many talented and willing volunteers! All activities require a chairperson (someone in charge), as well as multiple volunteers needed to help pull off the event. It’s a great way to stay involved with your students, meet their friends and enjoy some great music! Please contact Mrs. Colón if you have any questions.

**Brief Description of Volunteer Needs:**

* **Marching Band Season**: We kick off the year with one of our busiest activities - Marching Band. Enclosed you will find a calendar with all activities scheduled so far. As I add dates I will notify you as soon as possible.
* **Chaperones**: Chaperones are needed to accompany students to home games and away games, parades and other events. Chaperone duties include supervising the students, helping to carry items, assisting with uniforms, etc. Parents can order band shirts at the beginning of the season. Chaperones MUST attend a training meeting as required by the Richmond County BOE. Please let me know if you would like to be a chaperone so that I can provide you with a list of dates for meetings. It is a one-time meeting that you must attend where they review what is expected from chaperones as well as fill out appropriate paperwork and check your background. Even if you are a parent, you must attend this meeting if you plan on being a chaperone at any point.
* **Marching Band Uniforms**: We need many volunteers to help with the initial MB uniform fitting during the first few weeks of school, as well as ongoing help with the distribution and collection of uniforms before and after a home football game or event.
* **Senior Recognition**: This involves coordinating parents and their seniors in preparation for recognition at the Senior Night Football Game. Volunteers are needed to prepare items for the night and coordinate the lineup of parents and seniors for the recognition ceremony.
* **Middle School Band Night**: During the marching band season, we welcome the 8th grade band students for Middle School Band Night. They ‘BUDDY’ with Westside Band students for their first exposure to the WHS Band Program. Volunteers are needed to coordinate the night, to hand out pizza and to chaperone during the football game.
* **Band Banquet**: Volunteers are needed to help coordinate, serve food, set up and clean up the cafeteria during the annual Band Banquet.
* **Publicity**: Help ensure that the Band gets the publicity it deserves!
* **Band Awards**: Help organize end of the year band awards
* **Fundraising/Other**: Many volunteers are needed with the various fundraising events.

**What else do I need to know?**

I am looking to create a band website. If anyone is interested in taking on this project please contact me and let me know. We do have a Facebook page. The group is called Westside HS Patriot “POWERHOUSE” Marching Band. If you request an invitation I will accept it. I would; however, like to create a way to post online for EVERYONE to have access to.

**How do I stay informed?**

Most communication is from the band director in class. Feel free to join our Remind Group at https://www.remind.com/join/whsband02. You can also Text @whsband02 to 81010. Please make sure that I have a working cell phone number and email address that you can get updates as I send them out.