

# STERLING HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL BAND

## *Frequently Asked Questions and Answers*

*Over the past 16 years as Director of Bands at Sterling Heights High School, I have found parents and students alike, have many of the same questions concerning the high school band program. I hope that the information below is helpful.*

*If you have any questions or concerns about the Sterling Heights High School Band, please do not hesitate to contact me immediately.*

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### **How do I sign my student up for high school band?**

All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students interested in a band class, must sign up for **Cadet Band**. Students sign up for Cadet Band at the same time they sign up for all of their high school classes. Counselors from SHHS will be visiting middle schools usually in February to start this process.

### **How do I sign my student up for marching band?**

Marching Band is not a class. It is a co-curricular activity. This means that the activity is VERY closely related to a curricular class....band. About 90-95% of the students in marching band are also in a band class and vice-versa. Students sign up for marching band in early April. Information is made available in late March on our website. Registration for marching band will be on Revtrak. There will be a Band Camp "Kickoff Meeting" that will be scheduled shortly after Spring Break.

### **How do uniforms work?**

Marching uniforms are borrowed from the school with the exception of marching shoes and socks. Those get purchased when you sign up for marching band. Concert uniforms are purchased in the fall to be used throughout the year.

**What is band camp and pre-band camp and are they required?**

Pre-Camp is a week of practice at the school for marching band, scheduled at the end of July/ beginning of August. Students learn the basics of marching and begin to work on our music for the marching season. Band Camp is a week of practice at a camp in Lapeer. Students stay over night and learn the half time field show as well as other facets of marching band. Both are required for all marching band students.

**How much does it cost to have my student in band?**

There is no cost for a student to be in Cadet Band or any of the other band classes. The only cost involved would be the one time purchase of a concert uniform. Used options are also available. The cost of being in Marching Band this past season was around \$400. This covers all marching band expenses, including camp lodging and meals, season staff, music, drill, and participation in all home football games and other performances.

**What if I can't afford to send my student to band camp?**

Money is not a reason to not participate in marching band. Contact Mr. Imbrunone. Scholarship money is available.

**What instruments are in marching band?**

We march flute, clarinet, alto sax, tenor sax, bari sax, trumpet, mellophone (marching French horn), marching euphonium (marching baritone), trombone, sousaphone (marching tuba), drum line (snare, cymbal, tenor drums, bass), color guard (flags)

**What do I do if I don't play one of those instruments?**

If you play oboe or bassoon during concert season, you would play a secondary instrument during marching band or join color guard. If you play bass clarinet, you would march clarinet.

**Do I have to audition for cadet band or marching band?**

No audition for either group. You must be in band during 8<sup>th</sup> grade to be in the high school band. The only exception to this would be if you were in color guard. No experience necessary to join guard.

### **How do I march and play my instrument at the same time?**

Very carefully! LOL Seriously though, we take a very systematic, proven successful approach to teaching students how to do this. We sequence through everything in small steps beginning at PreCamp and continue throughout the season. With effort and practice it is achievable for everyone.

### **What if I do not own an instrument? Can I borrow?**

The only instruments we have for students to borrow are the “secondary instruments”. Oboe, Bassoon, Bass Clarinet, Tenor Sax, Bari sax, French horn, mellophone, baritone, marching baritone, tuba, sousaphone, drumline instruments. Students who play flute, clarinet, alto sax, trumpet, trombone should own their own instruments. If you need help purchasing one, contact me and I will help.

### **Sending my student away to camp scares me. They have never been away from home at a camp over night before.**

This is a common fear for many new parents to the program. As a parent of three young girls, I completely understand the concern. The best thing I can tell you is that your student is probably safer away at band camp than they would be in most other places. We typically have a 1 to 10 ratio of background checked chaperones to students that are with the students at all times, including 2 that take the night shift to make sure all cabins are safe at night. We also hire staff members to assist me during the instruction of the camp. Also, we hire a registered nurse to take care of any and all medical needs throughout the week. Most of the day, students are in a large group setting of around 100 people. In my opinion, the life experience your student will have away at camp and being in the marching band is worth the extra worry and concern you may have as a parent.

### **What are the Sterling Heights High School Band Boosters?**

The Band Boosters is a Parent organization formed with the purpose to help support the Sterling Heights HS Band. They help fundraise money for the band and help in many other ways. It's a volunteer group and a fantastic way to meet other parents and get involved with your students school.

**My student plans on attending MMSTC and I am afraid with the academic rigors of that program, that Cadet Band and Marching Band will be too much for my student to handle freshman year.**

If your student is attending MMSTC or is in the application process, joining Cadet Band and Marching Band will actually help your student become successful and better organized rather than making it more difficult for them. Every year, we typically have 5-10 band students at every grade level, attend MMSTC. These older students ALWAYS help mentor the younger ones in the program. When the student is very busy, it helps them manage their time better than if they had a lot of “free time”. Additionally, when a student’s day is filled with the strenuous academic classes, band gives them a nice change of pace. It is challenging in its own way but a break from the rigor of math and science.

**I can’t fit band into my schedule.**

To simply put it, band can fit into every class schedule scenario. We have had students in nearly every program and class that WCS has to offer. There is almost always a way to work it out. There are different options out there to fulfil graduation requirements. **For example, did you know that taking band can satisfy the second year of a language requirement! Did you know that being in marching band for 2 years, will take care of the Physical Education requirement!**

**I plan on playing a fall sport. I won’t be able to do marching band.**

In most marching seasons, about 20% of the marching band also plays a fall sport. This includes cheer, dance, boys soccer, boys tennis, girls swim, cross country, and football. It does make for a busy fall, but the coaches and I have a good working relationship and realize that in order for all the groups to be successful, all of the groups need to give a little. If you plan on marching and playing a fall sport, you should tell Mr. I once you know for sure.

**High school is going to be a tough transition for me. I don’t want to add any more to my plate like band.**

Band will help you with this transition!!! The older members of our program help mentor the younger students. This starts at Pre Camp and Band Camp.....a month before the start of school! By the time school starts, you will know around 100 people that attend SHHS. Doesn’t sound like a big deal but when that first day of HS comes, it will help you be a little less nervous knowing that you can come to the band room (a familiar place) before school starts to see some of your friends, before you head to your first hour class.