

# The Unofficial Guide for **NEW** Waukesha Northstar Marching Band Parents



## Welcome to the Waukesha Northstar Marching Band... 14-Time Wisconsin State Champions!

**Mr. Thomas Battersby, Director**

**Mr. Jacob Klingbeil, Assistant Director**

[www.northstarbands.org](http://www.northstarbands.org)

[www.charmsoffice.com](http://www.charmsoffice.com)

### **Social Media:**

@NorthstarBand on Twitter

Waukesha 'Northstar' Marching Band on Facebook

Waukesha Northstar Band Parents on Facebook

**We are very excited that your family has chosen to participate with one of the most successful band programs in the state of Wisconsin. The Northstar Marching Band has a successful tradition of excellence spanning over 40 years. This will be a unique and worthwhile experience for both you and your student. As with all great programs, there is a lot of preparation and support required to make this a rewarding experience for all.**

This handbook has been put together to assist both the student and parent. It is the product of former "new band parents" who spent a good bit of time in our first year in various stages of confusion. In the many hours watching practices, picking up our kids, and going to competitions we have all felt confused, lost and totally bewildered at one time or another. We hope this document will help ease you through the transition from "new" band parent to "veteran" band parent. We know each year many questions will arise. If you are unable to find the answer to your question, please contact one of the band directors or ask a fellow parent.

For most of us (parents and students alike), the transition from middle school band programs to high school band programs is huge, especially in marching band. The increased expectations come with greater rewards, in terms of your student's accomplishments and the pride you will have in watching them achieve their goals. This document is our attempt to share with you some of the finer points of making the most of your years as a band parent.

The Waukesha Northstar Marching Band program relies on parent volunteers in order to help provide your students with an enjoyable and rewarding band experience. Please join us in meeting this challenge by volunteering your time and talents. The students will reap the benefits. We welcome all new parents and look forward to getting to know you and your students!

Band Communications: BE SURE TO SEND AN EMAIL TO Mr. Battersby ([tbattersby@waukesha.k12.wi.us](mailto:tbattersby@waukesha.k12.wi.us)) and ask to put on the MB UPDATE EMAIL LIST. During the marching band season, Mr. Battersby also tweets as well, so be sure to sign up for an account, @Northstarband. Photos and general information are also posted throughout the season on the band's website and Facebook page. We also highly recommend that you follow the Waukesha Northstar Band Parents page on Facebook, as it is an invaluable source of information regarding schedule reminders. It is a great place for parents to ask questions.

**Any change in the schedule will be posted on the band website at**  
[www.charmsoffice.com](http://www.charmsoffice.com)

## THE TOP TEN THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW AS A BAND PARENT

### 10. **Your student is probably more capable than you realize.**

Even if you have all the time in the world, you will start to feel like a personal servant if you don't ask your kids to take some responsibility for their own stuff. Water jugs, lunches, props, laundry -- it never ends. Your student can make a sandwich, fill up a water jug, and set out their 'stuff'. It's up to you if want them using your washer and dryer, but they've got to learn someday. When you see what they accomplish and how hard they work for someone else, you will be amazed. This is an excellent time to start teaching (if you haven't already) self-management techniques that will serve them well throughout life. If you are inclined, help them create checklists so that they remember everything they need to bring. It will be a lot of stuff, so be ready.

### 9. **Get out of the car and come join us.**

Sounds odd, doesn't it? Many parents do not realize that they can enter the band room without ill effect. Be respectful of practices going on, but come on in and see what is happening. It is a great time to make introductions and let people know you are new to the band program. Park the car and come down to the field. The last 15-20 minutes of practice will be a run through of what the kids have learned so far. Watching the evolution of the band and the kids is really inspiring. It will blow your mind what your kid can do! And believe it or not, you will not see the same \*exact\* show week after week. Enjoy the show, but remember to stay quiet so you don't distract the kids. The kids know you are there and they appreciate it.

Speaking of parking, **DO NOT PARK ALONG THE CURB.** All students should be dropped off and picked up from a parking spot. If the parking spots are full, please park on the street on Greenmeadow or Sherryl Lane. We have a number of cars coming in and out, and parking along the curb will cause congestion and possible accidents. When the kids come off of the practice field, many of them have instruments they have to push up to the band room through the parking lots. Also, when the buses and equipment trucks leave for competitions and return, they need to park by the curb for loading and unloading. If you are parked in these areas or along the curb, you may be asked to move by a fellow parent. Leave those spaces free to make the process run smoothly and safely.

### 8. **Time Management**

You and your student WILL be busy -- especially from August until the middle of November. The schedule is posted on Charms so check it regularly. Your student will have to balance band and school work. It is

not easy, but it can be done (and it doesn't last forever!). You will have to find pockets of time for homework and other responsibilities. Some students do homework on the bus when necessary. Many band students are very successful at managing their studies, band commitments, and even sports. Please feel free to ask one of the veteran members how they do it all.

#### **7. Bring cash, warm clothes and something to sit on.**

Admissions are cash-only at most school functions. Competitions (defined later on) charge admission, anywhere from \$5 to \$10 per person. Children under 5 are usually admitted free. Concessions are cash only, as are some souvenir vendors. Aluminum bleachers are hard and COLD, especially in October. Most of the events are outside. Something to sit on will make the experience more enjoyable and keep the cold from creeping in. Plan accordingly.

#### **6. You are not alone.**

Most parents feel overwhelmed at first. The whole first year is a scramble to keep up. Here are some good phrases to put into use: "Excuse me, I'm new and I was wondering ...", "Hi, I'm a freshman parent, my name is ...". "I'm Ben's mom and I heard ...". You will be surprised how quickly you will be pulled into the fold. Rarely are other parents too busy to help you. We want you to join us and we love to share our experience with you. Your student will be making all kinds of new friends, why shouldn't you? You can find people to carpool with, volunteer with, celebrate with, and commiserate with. Band parents are valuable resources. They can help you find solutions to your dilemmas, and there will be dilemmas. You will also get to know the parents of the kids your student is hanging around. What a bonus!

#### **5. Band Directors are people, too.**

But they are BUSY people. They work long hours and their main focus is the kids. If you have a specific concern about your child and the band program, set up a time to discuss it. If you need general information, directors are probably not your best resource. Try a fellow parent first.

On another note: Marching band requires dedication and discipline from your student. The job of the directors is to help your student excel in band. Directors speak loudly, pointedly and sometimes without pleasantries. When mistakes are made, especially due to inattention or lack of effort, there are consequences. Try to relax and allow the process to work. Encourage your student to do their best, listen, and work hard. Everyone wants your child to be successful. You will learn this as you move through the season.

#### **4. We can't do it without you—volunteer and come to the parent meetings.**

Our program is fortunate to have extremely helpful and willing volunteers! Unlike many sports programs, the Northstar Band must have parent volunteers for the programs to run smoothly. The students need many helping hands behind the scenes to make their shows and competitions successful. You will hear about our volunteers and know they are there but often times they are "behind the scenes" putting together meals, fixing uniforms, loading and unloading equipment, etc. Please make sure that these volunteers know how much they mean to the program. The best way to do that? Volunteer! There is no experience necessary. No, REALLY! There are tasks that require specific skills, but most opportunities do not. If you can pull a soda from a cooler, push a percussion instrument, take tickets at a gate, use scissors, sew or build props - you have all the skills you need. Better yet, there is so much to do, you are bound to find something you actually enjoy doing. At first it looks like everyone else knows what is going on but you. Take the initiative and say, "I am new, and I'm here to help." We will put you to work straight away at something that is not far outside your comfort zone. You will be helping keep YOUR band fees down and have fun doing it. Trust us, we've been there.

You will be asked to commit time, energy, donations and the band fees to the band program. Plan to attend as many parent meetings as you can to keep up to date. There are only a few meetings per season, and they last about 60 minutes. Mr. Battersby usually addresses the parents with updates on the show and will answer parent questions. It is time well spent.

### 3. ISAs and Fundraising

Your Band fees only scratch the surface of the expenses incurred in running the Northstar Band's outstanding program. In 2018 each student is responsible for approximately \$375 plus a possible trip (cost to be determined) to cover the standard costs of the marching band season including but not limited to: uniforms, transportation, staffing, show design, overnight trips, general repair and maintenance expenses. ISA's (Individual Student Account) are a necessity for the Northstar band program to run smoothly, and are used to track the personal deposits and fundraising efforts of each student. Throughout the year you or your student will make deposits into their ISA account through personal checks, cash, fundraising and donations. ISA accounts are tracked on Charms so you can see the balance at any time.

Fundraisers help students realize what it takes to be part of something as big as the Northstar Marching Band. There are multiple voluntary individual fundraising options offered to your student to raise money for their ISAs, including things such as Scrip, Seroogy's chocolates, and coffee. March-A-Thon is another fundraiser completed during the summer. A mailer is sent to family and friends who prefer to support the student with 100% of the donations going right to the student. This has proven to be very successful in raising money for the students. If you have other fundraising ideas, they are always welcome!

**The Annual Northstar Band Golf Outing and Northstar *Bandfest* Show** are the primary group fundraisers for the marching band season. All parents are needed to volunteer at one, or both, events in some capacity in order to make them a success. For the golf outing, money is raised from the golf fees, hole sponsorships, raffle and silent auction, and dinner. For Bandfest, money is raised through the fee that each participating band pays to participate, admissions, concessions, and advertising in the event program. Money remaining after event expenses have been paid will be applied to the Northstar Band Fund.

### 2. Join CHARMS and READ YOUR EMAIL.

This could be said a thousand times and still not be said enough. As the season progresses, there are multiple changes to the schedule. CHECK YOUR EMAIL and CHARMS daily. If you do not understand something, you can ask the band directors for more information. They can be very busy so if you have another resource such as another parent, use that first. The Band Parent page on Facebook is a great resource for schedule changes. If you don't keep up with what is going on, you may miss something important, or miss something fun. Also, be flexible as there WILL be last minute changes to the band's schedule that are outside of the director's control, especially on a competition day.

### 1. Yes, it's worth it!

All of the rides, time, and effort (and it is extraordinarily a lot) that as a parent, you put into getting your child to practices are worth every second. Your student may get discouraged at first. There is a lot of repetition, hot sweaty days, failures, and disappointments. Then the show starts to come together and everything changes. There is a new energy, a new excitement. **Most of the kids LOVE band by the end of the season, so make them tough it out for the whole season.** It will be worth it. If you can push past the confusion and the chaos, you will probably get hooked like the rest of us. There is no way to describe how amazing this experience can be, but if you get involved you will find out for yourself.

## REGARDING THE STUDENTS

### BAND CAMP

Band camp this year will be conducted in mid-August for two weeks (4-days each) with students reporting at 12 PM and finishing at 9 PM (there is an hour dinner break). There are also "mini camps" held throughout the summer. Dates and times are available now on the Charms website. The staff and students work **very** hard throughout those days. It is mandatory for the students to attend as many of those sessions as possible because this is when they learn a large part of the music and drill for their marching band show.

The kids get quite a workout. Be prepared for plenty of sweating. It's an experience most of the kids "love to hate." Dress appropriately – t-shirts, shorts, comfortable sneakers, hat, sunscreen, and bug spray. Bring a water container – unlimited refills are available throughout the day – water is your best friend. Depending on the length of practice, there will be a break for meals, but always make sure your student have some snacks with them.

Band camp culminates with a "show-and-tell" for the band families. It's great fun to come out and see how far the kids have come in just one week.

A major benefit of band camp – when your freshman student arrives for the first day of high school, he or she will already be a part of a well respected group and will have a whole new group of friends (across all grades) to help with the transition into high school. Our band students look out for each other and especially for the new members.

### The dates for the 2018 season are as follows:

#### June

June 26: Percussion rehearsal 8am-noon  
June 27: winds and guard rehearsal 8am-noon  
June 28: everyone rehearsal 8am-noon

#### July

July 2: parade @West Allis  
July 4: Brookfield and Waukesha parades  
TBD: 4 hour sectional with tech, will be scheduled from them.

#### Camp 1:

August 13 (12-4 & 5-9)  
August 14 (12-4 & 5-9)  
August 15 (12-4 & 5-9)  
August 18 (9-12 & 1-4) [rain make up block 5-9, could be for missed block from any day this camp]

#### Camp 2:

August 22 (12-4 & 5-9)  
August 24 (12-4 & 5-9)  
August 25 (12-4 & 5-9)  
August 26 (12-4 & 5-9)

#### Extra rehearsals:

August 27 (3-6 & 7-9)  
August 29 (3-6 & 7-9)  
September 8 (12-4 & 5-9)

#### During the school year:

Monday and Wednesday; every week from 7 PM- 9 PM

## **Shows**

Times are not available until show line ups are set. Some of the following details maybe subject to change.

September 14 (Football halftime performance)

September 15 (Mukwonago competition)

September 16 (North's Bandfest)

September 22 (South competition)

September 23 (West competition)

September 28 (Football Homecoming halftime performance)

September 30 (Oak Creek competition)

October 6 (Chippewa Falls competition)

October 7 (River Falls competition)

**October 13 (State competiton)**

## **Performance Guidelines For Students:**

1. Make sure all of your uniform parts are clean and fitted properly. Improper uniform care will not be tolerated.
2. You **MUST** wear a black t-shirt with sleeves under your jacket.
3. You **MUST** wear black mid-calf or long socks.
4. You will be required to wear shorts or a spandex short, such as a biker short, under the uniform pants.
5. Long hair (both male/female) will be put up completely under the shako (hat).
6. No earrings or nail polish. If they cannot be removed, cover with tape or a band aid.
7. Make sure your instrument is in good repair so that you can perform to the best of your ability.
8. All students are to report to the band room at the time specified by the director.
9. When in uniform: No PDA, No eating, No swearing, No running (unless told to do so by a Director or staff member).
10. Everyone should be professional while in a performance setting. You are representing the Northstar Marching Band. Unprofessional behavior could be cause for dismissal from the band program.

## **Physical Guidelines Policy**

The Northstar Band department and its competitive ensembles require a high degree of physical training and conditioning. It is part of the curriculum of each ensemble to develop and maintain a certain level of athletic coordination and conditioning that in turn is part of the program for competitions. With this understood there are several guidelines the staff and students need to be aware of and follow.

1. All students and parents are aware that physical conditioning, training and endurance are an integral part of the skill sets required for any type of success of the extra-curricular or co-curricular activities
2. All of these ensembles will require a certain level of physical ability to participate and thrive in the extra-curricular or co-curricular ensemble. Inability in certain areas of physical training or conditioning could jeopardize the student's ability to actively participate in one of the extra-curricular or co-curricular activities. These issues could be because physical skill sets or medical reasons.
3. Students who have medical issues should have their doctor's permission to participate in any of these extra-curricular or co-curricular activities. In addition the student and or parent should discuss the situation with the director of the activity prior to any rehearsals or practices. It will be at the discretion of the Director to proceed or disallow the student's participation in any situation that might put the director, the band department, or Waukesha North High School at risk or liability for any injuries or medical situations.

### **Resolution of Conflicts**

Problems may occur during the season. The student should attempt to handle these by first emailing their concern/issue to their Section Leader. If the issue is not resolved, then they should email a Drum Major. If there is still no resolution, they should email Mr. Battersby.

If there is an issue or concern that arises during the day of practice or an event, the student should talk to their Section Leader. If no resolution, then they should go to a Drum Major. If still no resolution, then reach out to one of the techs. As a final resort, the student can then go to Mr. Battersby.

## **Marching Band Season**

The Marching Band season starts as band camp ends. Practice continues after school during the week. Mr. Battersby will provide your students with a practice schedule, which are on Monday and Wednesday evenings throughout September and into November. Be sure to check Charms! The rehearsal and competition schedule are also listed in this handbook.

### **Football games**

The band performs their show at half time at all home football games.

### **Northstar Bandfest Field Show Competition**

Waukesha North High School Northstar Band is sponsoring its sixth high school marching band field show on Sunday, September 16, 2018, held in Waukesha North's stadium. Events like this give marching bands an opportunity to give back to the community through music performance. In addition, this event is one of the primary fundraisers for Waukesha North's band program. Opportunities to sign up to volunteer will be provided closer to the date.

### **Competitions**

The marching band competes with other high school bands throughout the fall. The competitions can be local or out of town. Please come to as many events as you can. All of the students appreciate hearing the cheering from the stands. It is great to watch the competitions and cheer the kids on. It's also a great way to meet other parents. Just look for and sit by all the purple parents. Veteran parents will *always* make room for new parents.

**State Competition** – Our culminating competition in the state of Wisconsin is our State Championships in Whitewater. Yearly, over 30 bands gather in Whitewater, WI for the WSMA State Championships where bands compete in four classes based on school size. The Northstar band is a member of the AAA class, and has totaled 14 state championships since 1992. In the past 21 years, Waukesha North has placed in the top 2 in the state each year.

### **Uniforms**

Your student will be issued a marching uniform consisting of jacket, pants, shoes, shako (hat), gauntlets and they will purchase their gloves (as appropriate by section) through the band department for a nominal fee. You will need to provide black socks (at least mid calf), a black T-shirt, and shorts. Students are responsible for assuring that they treat their uniform with great care. The uniforms are issued to the student in a labeled garment bag in late spring. You and the student are responsible for maintaining and cleaning the uniform properly throughout the season. (Refer to the uniform care sheet provided with the uniform or posted on Charms). The complete uniform cost for replacement is \$350.00.

It's imperative that your student comes to each event prepared! They should have their instrument, uniform, CLEAN shoes, shako, gloves and black socks (at least mid calf). Without these items – they will not be able to participate.

**Veteran band parents**, help keep the band program strong by welcoming the new parents. A huge reason our band is respected and has had so much success is because of the commitment of the parents. Help the new parents feel comfortable. We've all been there and are anxious to keep the band strong.

#### **YOU KNOW YOU'RE A NORTHSTAR MARCHING BAND PARENT WHEN ...**

- You make three more trips than expected to drop off your child with everything he or she needs.
- You can't pick your child out of the crowd because they all look alike
- You no longer speak of your child as a fourteen-year-old son/daughter, but as a "freshman flute."
- You prominently display a band calendar in your kitchen and have band dates marked on your work calendar
- You secretly wish you could stand on the podium, be in the drum line or try your hand with the flags.
- You practice whistling when no one is around because you have a job to do in the stands!
- You know that you are expected to embarrass your kid beyond belief by dressing in purple from head to toe.
- Your newest best friends are fellow band parents!

#### **THE LANGUAGE OF THE NORTHSTAR MARCHING BAND**

**Auxiliary:** Aka *the Guard*. Enhancing the beauty of the music we play is a hardworking group of young people who leap, toss, and maneuver with style and grace. They are part of the reason the marching band is so successful. The beautiful banners, energizing flags, and highflying toss of the saber and rifles are the domain of the guard. The guard rides their own bus, and have additional expenses for make-up, hair, and dance wear. They also have traditions and spirit activities in addition to the ones they share with the rest of the band.

**Brass:** The trumpets, mellophones, baritones, and tubas. These may be further subdivided into low brass (baritones, mellophones, tubas) and high brass (trumpets).

**Captions:** Awards are given in competition to acknowledge specific excellence in the areas of *Music, Visual, Percussion, Auxiliary and General Effect*. There is a relationship between these awards and the final competition scores, as the captions are subcategories used in the overall scoring. It is possible to win the caption awards and still not win the competition.

**CHARMS:** When you join us, you will be given detailed instructions on how to sign up for the marching band database. It is ESSENTIAL that you sign up to keep informed about what is happening with marching band. The website is [charmsoffice.com](http://charmsoffice.com).

**Class A, AA, AAA, AAAA:** Designations assigned by school size for purpose of competition. For the purposes of the WSMA state competition, Waukesha North is a Class AAA band.

**Drum line:** The bass drum, tenor drum, and snare drums. These percussionists march on the field.

**Free time:** HAHAHHAHA! Sigh. Something, if you are lucky, you regain after marching band season. But don't bet on it.

**Freshman Parent:** A first year band parent. Your child may or may not be in the freshman class. For example, a parent of a sophomore student marching for the first time is a *freshman* parent.

**Guard:** Also known as the Auxiliary. See above.

**Invitational (aka Competitions or Shows):** Many schools host a showcase for area marching bands. The host school performs an exhibition of their show and is not scored with the rest of the visiting schools. Invitationals are a way to judge the band's progress because they are scored and judged. The results (individual or seasonal) of Invitationals have no bearing on the WSMA State competition.

**Mellophone:** is a brass instrument that is typically used in place of the horn (sometimes called a French horn) in marching bands or drum and bugle corps. North marches with mellophones.

**(The) Pit or Frontline:** The non-marching portion of the band. It includes keyboards, certain drums, some percussion instruments, and instruments that are not practical to march. The frontline requires a 'pit crew' to help get equipment on and off the field.

**Props:** These are objects used to enhance a show. All manner of structures are all props. We make most of our own show-specific props and it is a huge undertaking. Whether we need carpentry skills or sewing skills depends on the show. Watch for requests to help out.

**Sections:** Each instrument type is part of a 'section.' Each section develops its own pride and personality. At some point each section will design their own T-shirt to identify themselves, usually toward the end of band camp.

**Shakos:** The hats worn by the marching band with the big plumes in front.

**Show shirts:** The T-shirts specifically designed with this year's show theme.

**Woodwinds:** Flutes, clarinets, and saxophones.

## **PARENTS SHARE THINGS THEY WISH THEY HAD KNOWN THEIR FIRST YEAR**

### **Things You'll Need:**

'Deep Woods Off', sunscreen, hand warmers, stadium seats, blankets, and band aids.

### **Capturing the Memories:**

Remember to bring a camera to band performances to capture the excitement. Unless otherwise posted, we encourage you to video the band's performance during practice and competitions. The pictures and videos taken throughout the season are included in a year-end DVD.

## **BAND MEMBERS SHARE WISDOM AND SURVIVAL TIPS FOR YOUR STUDENT.**

1. ALWAYS be on time, which really means 10-15 minutes early.
2. When in doubt, stop talking.
3. Show respect to everyone and listen to what 'veterans' have to say. They're probably right.
4. Don't expect to know everything the first day. Even people who have marched before still have things to learn.
5. Take things seriously, but not TOO seriously. In the end "It is only high school marching band."

6. We are very good at what we do because we can focus when we need to.
7. Stay well rested, fed, and hydrated.
8. Always have all your materials on you or close enough that you can get them quickly.
9. Know how to work, but also know how to relax. Know that the two NEVER occur at the same time, EVER.
10. Keep up on your schoolwork. Take every opportunity to do your homework. On the bus, extra time in class, at appointments — do whatever it takes. Be as productive as possible.
11. You will be called out eventually. Don't be afraid or upset. When it happens, just speak up and don't worry about being wrong.
12. Always trust the instructors. Especially when you think they aren't right. They are rarely wrong.
13. You may want to quit. But **DON'T**.

**Welcome to the Waukesha Northstar High School Marching Band family!**