

# **SHAWNEE MISSION WEST**

## **BAND DEPARTMENT**

### **BAND HANDBOOK 2009-2010**

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# STOP!!!

**Before you do anything else, please read and follow the directions on this page!**

1. Log onto [www.charmsoffice.com](http://www.charmsoffice.com)
2. At the parent/student login on the right side of the screen, type shawneemissionwband and enter the site
3. On the next page, enter your students school ID and you will access a page to provide contact information. Please fill out as much information as you are able to provide to help us in keeping you informed this year!

# ALL THOSE BANDS!!!!!!

## Concert Bands – The foundation of our program

- **Freshman Band:** This group is a concert band that meets Block 7. The Freshman Band will march pre-game with the Marching band at all home football games. The Freshman Band also performs at school concerts and possibly a festival in the spring. Members of Freshman Band are eligible to participate in the Basketball Pep Band, Musical Pit Orchestra, and Solo/Small Ensemble Festival.
- **Symphonic Band:** Students in grades 10-12 selected for this band through the audition process in October will perform at all school concerts, the Chili Supper in February, and the State Large Group Festival in April.
- **Wind Ensemble:** This band is made up of a selected group of students. Personnel for this group is determined by a recorded (cassette tape or CD) playing tests in October. All band students in grades 10-12 are eligible for this ensemble. This ensemble performs at all school concerts, the Chili Supper in February, and the State Large Group Festival in April.

## Athletic Bands – The most visible of our Bands

- **Marching Band, Grades (9) 10-12:** This group performs at football games, parades and marching festivals/contests. It is the most visible music group in the school and brings a great deal of pride to the music department, school and community. It does require some rehearsals outside of school time as well as some weekend performances. After football season the band will divide into two concert groups. See above.
- **Pep Band**  
The Pep Bands are open to anyone grades 9-12 who would like to participate. During football season we may meet at some away games to play some music, make some noise and support our team. During basketball season, the Pep Bands play for several boys and girls home games. The rehearsal and performance schedules will be posted as the season nears in the end of October.

## Jazz Bands – Our uniquely American musical art form

- **Overland Express:** This is the school's top performing jazz band. This band is made up of students selected the previous spring from an audition process. Enrollment is limited. Overland Express performs at numerous community and school functions throughout the year.
- **Jazz Lab:** This band has an open enrollment policy for students who play jazz instruments (within the director's discretion). Students in grades 9-12 may participate. Extensive study of jazz history, improvisation, and understanding jazz styles is the focus of this course.

## Other Ensembles – Pit Orchestra, Full Orchestra, Jazz Combos...

- **Percussion Ensemble:** This group is mandatory for all 10-12 grade marching percussion students during marching season. They meet on Monday evening from 6:00p.m. until 9:00 p.m. After marching season attendance becomes optional and,

freshmen may join. They will then work on various world drumming techniques, novelty percussion and standard percussion ensembles. Later in the year they will produce a full-length concert as well as perform in various other venues throughout the community.

- More information on these other groups will be posted as the opportunities arise. Membership will vary but numerous opportunities exist to perform if you have the desire.

## **OTHER PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Honor Bands**

There are numerous other performance opportunities in the KC metro area outside the bands at West. Some are school related and some are just local groups. Take a look at some of these.

Kansas Music Educators Association (KMEA) District Honor Band and District Honor Jazz Ensemble. These groups are only open to sophomores, juniors and seniors. These groups audition in November to form a band that meets one time in December to practice and perform a concert. If you perform with either of these groups you may then audition for the All-State KMEA Honor Band or Jazz Ensemble in January. The concert for those selected from that audition takes place in Wichita in late February. The list of audition materials can be found at [www.ksmea.org](http://www.ksmea.org) and [www.neksmea.org](http://www.neksmea.org).

Freshman have their own honor bands available; one called the John Philip Sousa Honor Band which is located in Lawrence and the other is the NEKSMEA Freshman Honor Band held in Blue Valley. Both take place over a weekend in the fall. Auditions are by recommendation of the director only. **Any** freshman who may be interested should let the directors know in September. Information will be presented sometime in September or October.

Local honor ensembles include the KUKC Wind Symphony and the KC Youth Orchestra and the KC Youth Jazz Orchestras. Details about auditions come out early in the year so be sure and ask if you are interested. There are also various college recruiting honor bands in the spring open to upperclassmen usually contemplating attending the hosting university when they attend college.

### **Solo and Ensembles**

A way for students to excel individually or in small groups is through participation in the Solo and Small Ensemble Festival in the spring. Anyone 9-12 may participate in these events. It is a natural outgrowth of private lessons. In fact, anyone who studies privately SHOULD participate with a solo that they have been working on. A solo should probably be chosen prior to Christmas Break. You will need to provide an accompanist to play the piano part. The directors can help in this process.

Ensembles can be made up of three to 24 players, but most often three, four or five people. These are often friends who like to hang out together and find a great deal of fun playing their instruments. This could be flute trios, clarinet quartet (2 soprano, 1 alto, 1 bass), brass quintet (2 trumpets, F-horn, trombone, tuba), percussion ensemble 3 keyboards, snare, aux percussion) etc. There are many options for groupings. Again, the directors can help finding an appropriate group and even music.

We will host a recital night at West prior to going to the district festival. Those who receive a “I” rating (Excellent) at regionals are then eligible to perform at the state Solo and Ensemble Festival. More information about solo and ensemble festival will be sent out in November or can be found on the Band-Aides web site.

## **VARSITY MARCHING BAND (10-12)**

Marching Band begins before school even starts! Watch the Band-Aides website and summer director's letters for the dates and times for Marching Camp.

### **REHEARSALS AND PRACTICES (primarily 10-12 only)**

**Morning Rehearsals:** During marching season, full band rehearsal will begin promptly @ 7:00 on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and continue through first block.

**Percussion sectionals:** Percussion rehearsals are normally scheduled for every Monday night during marching season. It is **expected** that all batterie and pit percussion students grade 10-12 will be in regular attendance at these rehearsals. Failure to do so will result in loss of grade points and/or removal from the program. After marching season, attendance becomes optional (although highly encouraged) AND open to freshmen.

**Seminar Rehearsal:** We practice every Seminar (Block 8) during the First Quarter. Students will report to their assigned seminar and will then report to the band room at the completion of the seminar activities approximately 40 minutes into the period. EVERYONE is expected to attend the seminar rehearsal unless he or she is having difficulty in another academic class. Any student that is having academic difficulty should take the following steps:

1. Notify a director of the class in question and teacher of that specific class.
2. Make arrangements with the teacher to meet either before or after school for assistance.
3. If additional assistance is needed during Seminar, the student must provide a written note from the teacher **prior** to the day requested. The student will then be allowed to miss Seminar rehearsal. Again, it is the student's responsibility to make up any work missed during rehearsal.

### **SECTIONALS**

A sectional is an extra rehearsal called for by either the section leader or one of the band directors. When a sectional is called, **it is required** that all section members attend.

**Grade points will be awarded!** There will be 4-5 required sectionals throughout the marching season. Sectionals are used to improve the overall quality of the section. Memory, dynamics, pitch, etc., should be the goals of your sectionals. These rehearsals

can provide section unity both musically and socially. No band can be truly outstanding without sectional work. Section leaders are take it upon themselves to develop a regular sectional routine that fits the schedules of the section's members.

## **Marching Band Uniform Information**

Wearing of the complete uniform is an important part of our performance, and will be part of your grade.

### **MARCHING BAND**

Uniforms are issued during the marching camp in August. A complete uniform consists of: band jacket, black pants, cape, garment bag, and shako (hat). Black shoes and black gloves for ALL marchers will be purchased during camp. Cost for shoes is \$30.00 and gloves will be \$5.00. Students will be responsible to pay for both black shoes and gloves prior to the first performance, in addition to the regular band fees. **Black OVER-THE-ANKLE** socks are required to be worn with the uniform. For the first home football game you will need black shorts to wear with your socks, shoes and band T-shirt.

\*Tuba Section will receive black berets instead of a shako.

Most of the juniors and seniors already know this, but the sophomores and freshmen don't and it's a good review anyway. You have been assigned a uniform that has your name on a label and is kept on the rack by sections behind your section leader's uniform (It should always be there and stored there.) It will be yours for the season. You won't be taking it home, but you are responsible for it in these ways:

1. Every time you wear your uniform, you need to wear soft nylon or cotton like shorts. NO jeans or any other heavy or rough fabric and your band t-shirt with your required black socks and shoes. Don't forget your black gloves. You will all be changing together in the band room or in a parking lot in front of everyone. It will be easier if you could just wear the shorts, t-shirt, black socks and shoes to school, since you will ride the bus in uniform.
2. Always make sure your uniform has your neck band and snap it in place. When you return from any event you will be taking it out and giving it to your section leader.
3. All hair needs to be in the hat, both male and female, so please bring whatever you need to pin it, or tie it up.
4. Please be careful to keep your uniform clean by watching where you sit and not eating with your jacket on.
5. If you have a repair of ANY kind i.e.: dirt, lose buttons, or snaps etc. please fill out a green repair tag, hang your uniform as usual BUT put the tag over the hanger on the outside of the bag and HANG IT IN THE DESIGNATED LOCATION. It will be repaired and you will find it again on the rack with your section behind your section leader. If something needs to be fixed while at an event, we always bring a sewing kit.
6. After and event, please hang your uniform correctly on the hanger so it doesn't wrinkle.

7. If by some slim chance you forget to wear your black socks or bring your black gloves, it will cost you \$5.00 to purchase them for that performance. If you forget your T-shirt, you will be charged \$10. Invoices will be sent at the end of the season for anyone who has purchased extra gloves, shoes or T-shirts.
8. Moms will be around at every event. Please ask for assistance. The band room is busy, and we all want things to go smoothly so you can get to where you're going relaxed so you can have a fun time with your friends.
9. Say THANK YOU to our parent volunteers! We could not survive without our faithful Band-Aides parents. Be KIND, RESPECTFUL, and THANKFUL!

## **CARE AND CLEANING OF UNIFORMS**

**Marching Band uniforms cost \$600.00 each and must last for another 5 years!** Each student and family is responsible for the general care of the uniform. Please remember to correctly hang your uniform after each performance and return it to the uniform storage room. A portion of your band fees will be used for the dry cleaning of the uniform. If your uniform becomes soiled, please contact a director or the Band-Aides West uniform chair. Every student will be shown how to properly hang the uniform. After each performance, the uniforms will be checked by section leaders. If the uniform is found hanging improperly, points will be deducted from that performance grade.

## **BAND T-SHIRT**

Each student will receive a band t-shirt. These t-shirts are to be worn as our uniform when it may be too hot to use the full marching uniform, and for basketball pep band in the winter. Also, these t-shirts are to be worn under your marching uniform. If we take our jackets off during a football game or festival because of heat, we will still have a uniform look that shows off our pride. Most importantly, the t-shirts will protect our band uniforms from sweat. Yuk! Keep your shirt. Replacements cost money. Always wear the current year's T-shirt under the uniform and for all pep band performances.

## **CONCERT BANDS**

### **Wind Ensemble / Symphonic Band Placement**

Due to the size of the marching band, it is necessary to divide the band for concert season. The **Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band** will meet during **Block 1**.

-NEW- This year Mr. Thomas and Mr. Hupe will listen to each student during a LIVE audition to determine placement in the two concert bands. Audition music will consist of part of the District Honor Band Audition music, an excerpt of music to be played by the Wind Ensemble and scales. Exact details will be announced in Early October.

### **CONCERT BAND (Wind Ensemble/Symphonic Band/Freshman Band)**

- Freshman Band – Dress up. Look nice!
  - Men – Nice pants with dress shirt. Tie is preferred. Coat is optional. Dress shoes and socks. No jeans, sneakers or sandals.

- Women – Mid-calf or longer dress or skirt with top. Nothing short. Nice pant outfits are OK too. No hats. No flip-flops.
- Wind Ensemble & **SYMPHONIC BAND** - Black formal dress. Tux coats for men will be provided. They are property of SM West and must be dry cleaned (at the student's expense) and returned at the end of the concert season.
  - Men – Black dress pants, shoes and socks. White tux shirt, black bow tie and black cummerbund. Black tux coat. Both Hobby Lobby and Michael's stock a wing collar shirt and bow tie set for about \$20. Men may instead purchase a higher quality shirt/tie/cummerbund set from Cunningham Parade Wear. They also sell tuxedo pants.
  - Women – All black. Long black dress, long black skirt with top, or black dress pants with top. Dress shoes. This is to be FORMAL dress. Revealing clothing, casual pants and flip-flops are not acceptable.

**Ladies in all bands:** It is our goal to achieve a conservative, uniform and formal appearance for our concerts. The audience attention should be drawn to our ensembles, not to individuals. In this spirit, please avoid strapless tops, spaghetti straps and low neck lines. All skirts and dresses should be mid-calf or longer. **No flip-flops.**

The last concert of the year is traditionally in “nice-springy” clothes. No tuxedos, no formal concert black.

Jeans, t-shirts, and tennis shoes are unacceptable for concert dress. If you show up in dressed improperly, you will not perform or you will be asked to go home and change into the correct dress. If you do not perform, you will receive a “0” grade for that performance.

## **JAZZ ENSEMBLES**

West is fortunate to have two jazz ensembles within our school schedule. The top band is selected by audition only and is called Overland Express. A big percentage of those players study privately with jazz instructors to improve their “jazz feel” and ability to improvise. This group will perform many times throughout the year beyond just our school concerts. This is a wonderful Public Relations tool for the band as well as West High School. Students in this ensemble must be reliable and responsible as they will be treated very much as professional musicians. The band in many cases will earn a performance fee which will be put into an account to help pay for special jazz events and clinicians throughout the year. Every three years this group will travel in the U.S. to explore the roots of Jazz as well as attend concerts.

The second ensemble is called the Jazz Lab Band which is open to any instrumentalist who plays saxophone, trumpet, trombone, drum set, bass (upright or electric), electric guitar or piano. There will also be a strong component of listening and improvisation. These two items make all the difference between a small concert band and a Jazz band.

This is a training ensemble for Overland Express, but it is no slouch of a band. Be ready for some fun, hip jazz music.

The Jazz Bands will combine to produce the Fall Ball in November and host the annual Jazz on the Bridge in March. The bands may also attend various jazz festivals in the spring. These may be during the school day or on weekends.

## **IMPORTANT GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **CAN I BE IN OTHER PROGRAMS AT WEST?**

**YES!** We have chosen to keep our contest involvement lower than at other schools. This is true at SM West so our students **CAN** be involved in other programs including debate, cross-country, football, soccer, volleyball, theater, choir and many others. Except for our morning rehearsals, the rest of the day is yours. Home football games rarely conflict with anyone except varsity and some JV football players. Even then, we have such a great relationship with Coach Callahan, that he will allow most band students to join with us for half-time. Those students are still part of the band for contests and parades, but sometimes do not perform the nights of games. You will be **BUSY**, but you will also learn the important lessons of how to budget time and prepare in advance. **WE DO EXPECT STUDENTS TO BE AT PERFORMANCES AND REHEARSALS UNLESS THEY HAVE JUST BEEN IN ANOTHER SCHOOL EVENT AND CANNOT MAKE IT TO THE REHEARSAL OR PERFORMANCE.** You will get a schedule of all performances and you will be expected at those performances. We are very proud of our band members who have been All-Americans, All-State/District in every sport and activity **AS WELL AS OUR ALL-STATE MUSICIANS!**

### **ACADEMICS!**

The band is a part of the academic program at SM West. Academics are the primary reason you are in high school. You will be graded on performance, personal growth in technical proficiency on your instrument, understanding of music theory and music history and performance within the group. We are an integral part of the academic program at West. You will find **GREAT SUPPORT** from members of the band community to assist you in your success. You must be prepared to **STUDY** and to **PRACTICE**, but you will find many forms of support as a member of the Bands at West.

### **INSTRUMENT RENTAL**

The school owns an inventory of certain instruments for student use. These can be rented from the Shawnee Mission District for \$50.00 per year. A contract must also be signed and returned. After the contract is signed, the student is responsible for the care of the instrument. Repair of damage due to misuse and reed replacement will be the student's responsibility. Summer rental will be \$27.00. All percussionists must pay the \$50.00 rental charge each year to use the school instruments.

Instrumental Rental Checks should be made to: Shawnee Mission School District.

## **BAND FEES –**

Band fees for students grades 9-12 will be \$90.00. These fees pay for the band t-shirt, meals at designated games and performances, cleaning of the uniform, and transportation. Combination locks are provided for all band lockers. **Students that lose their lock will be charged \$10.00 for a replacement.** Band fees are due on the first day of school. Band Fee Checks should be made to: SMW Band.

If payment of fees is a problem – PLEASE – communicate with the directors. It is our desire that anyone who wants to participate in the SMW Bands has the opportunity. We will make every effort to be flexible so that all students can participate. Any information shared will be held confidential and will only be shared with those who may help with the costs.

## **GRADING**

Band is a performance-based class, thus performances carry great weight in determining grades. Each performance is the culmination of weeks of hard work. Only under the most extenuating of circumstances will a missed performance be excused. If an emergency will keep you from attending a performance, a parent should contact a director **before** the performance (if possible). As members of an ensemble, we count on each other.

Quarterly Grades will be computed as follows:

- Daily rehearsal points – 5 points each rehearsal
  - Students must be on time, with all required materials and contribute positively to the rehearsal
- Performance – 100 points
  - Students must be on time and have the full appropriate uniform
  - Students must care for the uniform appropriately
- Tests and quizzes- may be playing or written. Points will be assigned as appropriate

## **TARDY POLICY**

All students must be at the assigned location, in your seat, or in the parade block, with all equipment and music to be considered ‘on time’ for a rehearsal or performance. Students that are late will lose their daily rehearsal points and be subject to the Shawnee Mission West tardy policy. During marching season, students will run a lap around the rehearsal field for being tardy. Set those alarms! When a student reaches 3 tardies, they will receive a 30 minute detention in the band room. Students will be able to “redeem” their tardies with band service as determined by the directors. After the second detention from the band, the student will be referred to the office for additional consequences. This has become a problem in the last couple of years. For the benefit and growth of our bands, this policy WILL be enforced!

## **BAND RULES**

Yes it does. Here's why:

1. ALL Shawnee Mission District and Shawnee Mission West rules and policies apply to the band anytime we are together as the West Band, including all trips.
2. Take care of our stuff, including instruments, lockers, the band room and other band equipment.
3. The band office is for the use of the directors. Please respect that. Please do not ask to store items in the band office, use the refrigerator, make personal copies, or use the computers. There is a phone for your use by the ROTC room. With over 150 students in our program, our small band office cannot handle these types of requests. Thank you.
4. In general, **if it will detract from someone else's enjoyment or hurt the quality of your band, don't do it! Use your head.**

## **BAND LETTER SYSTEM**

To earn the school's letter in band is a great accomplishment. Students may check the website for a lettering form outlining the requirements for earning the school's letter. This is to be used as a reference. Points may vary. You may check your progress in Charms throughout the year. Points will be checked and finalized with the students in mid to late April.

## **INDIVIDUAL IMPROVEMENT**

Everyone joined the band at some point because it looked like fun! I know I did. We hope it continues to be fun and rewarding, providing opportunities for friendships, memories, a sense of belonging and the opportunity to travel both near and far.

With that being said, it is more fun to be a part of a winning team; a group who is excellent in every respect. Everyone wants to be a winner. Band students are no different. For our band to excel and be offered trips to perform internationally we must have excellence individually. In order to accomplish that, there are several things students can do.

The easiest is home practice. Just like math and English classes have homework, so does band. We also have tests only we call them concerts or contests. Our tests take place in front of hundreds even thousands of people. It is important that every member of the band does his or her homework. An hour or maybe two a week will do wonders! That means taking the music home and practicing those difficult measures until they are correct and cannot be played wrong again. Everyone is EXPECTED to practice their instrument at home regularly.

The next way to improve individually and as a group is to take private lessons on your instrument from a specialist on YOUR instrument. The very best musicians take private lessons. The people who want to be accepted into the district and state honor bands take private lessons. The people who want to earn top ratings at contest with their solo or ensemble take private lessons. That's just the way it is. It is also VERY helpful when auditioning for college scholarships. Private lessons can pay off in thousands of dollars of

scholarship money! If you want more information about private lessons, please visit with a director, they can help.

Finally, students can attend a summer band camp. We have two very fine camps in the area, one at KU and one at UMKC. Both are staffed with nationally recognized teachers for the week of study. These camps are an intense week of music making both in bands as well as like instrument classes and private lessons. There is also plenty of fun time built into the schedule. Former students who have gone to band camp have developed life-long friendships. SMWest Band-Aides will send 5 students to a band camp every summer because we believe so strongly in the value of band camps. Look for more information on the band-aides website.

### **BAND-AIDES WEST**

Band Aides West is the official parent support organization for the West bands. This is an incredible group of parent volunteers that provide chaperones, support, and financial aid to our program. EVERY parent is strongly encouraged to become an active member in BAW. Membership is \$5.00 per year, per family. Come and join in the fun!! Band Aides West will sponsor the annual Fall Picnic in August, the Spaghetti Dinner & Auction in October, the Chili Supper in February, and our Band Awards Banquet in May. BAW also offers scholarships to band camps in the summer as well as scholarships for major trips IF the parents are active members of BAW. As with any great organization, BAW is only as good as the people involved. YOU are always needed and appreciated. Band Aides West will meet the first Tuesday of each month, at 7:00 P.M. in the band room, unless otherwise noted.

### **Band Picnic**

All band students, grades 9-12, are encouraged to attend the Fall Picnic at Shawnee Mission Park with their families. This is a great opportunity to relax with family and friends AND welcome the incoming freshmen and their families to the West Band Program!

### **FUND-RAISING**

At various times during the school year, the band will run a fund-raiser. This money is used to pay for clinicians, equipment and other band needs. Often, monies raised will help offset the costs associated with major trips by being placed into individual student accounts. Please plan for your family to participate in our important fund-raising activities. This would also included BAW fundraisers which are tied to program support, but we still need parent help. Information for fundraisers will be handed out in class and posted on the web site.

### **WEB SITE & BAND COMMUNICATION**

Bookmark it, check it often. Our band parents do a fantastic job of keeping us all aware of upcoming band events. Information on the web site includes schedules, report times, driving directions to performance venues, and much more! For any questions you have, check the web site first. The answer is probably found somewhere on the site.

**www.bandaides.org** – check it often!

## **CHARMS**

We use an online system to help us maintain student data and communicate with both students and parents. It is called Charms. You will find a link on our website. Please log on as soon as possible and look around. This has become a great enhancement to the activities of our band. Parents will be able to track individual student fundraising, update your own contact information, see what instrument, uniform or music your student has checked out, make trip payments and many other details. Since this system is still relatively new, not all features are functional, but these are a few of the potential benefits of the Charms database.

Additionally, the directors send weekly e-mails to our band parents and students on Tuesdays of announcements made in class as well as other major upcoming events, reminders and congratulatory notes. This is why we ask for e-mail addresses on our Band Information sheets. Please keep us up to date on your e-mail address and we will do our best to keep you up to date on BAND. We promise no junk or advertisements; just band stuff!

To close, I believe in the old adage:

*The strength of each wolf is the pack  
and  
The strength of the pack is each wolf.*

The West Bands have enjoyed a rich tradition of excellence in performance by the students, excellence is support of the parents and excellence in leadership from the staff. TOGETHER we – collectively – can continue. We need each other. Without everyone doing their part, students, parents and staff, we are not as strong. The staff has a dream, a vision for the future. Students and parents, we want to work beside you to provide many more years of excellent performances, as well as new awards and accolades for the West students, Bands, and community.

**Let the music begin!**

## **PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK FORM**

I understand the guidelines, rules and expectations to participate in the Shawnee Mission West Instrumental Band program.

I will always represent the SMW Band in a positive manner by my actions, words, musicianship, and performance level.

I also understand that the band program at SM West is a full year commitment. Enrollment in both Marching Band and Concert Band is expected for all students. Although the Shawnee Mission Program Guide has different enrollments for first and second semesters, it is required that students will enroll for the entire year.

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Student Signature

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Date

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Parent Signature