



New Charger Band Parent FAQ

Welcome to a new phase of life, not only for your student, but for you as well! We hope to make you feel both welcome and confident as your family transitions to this latest exciting chapter.

- **What will be different from middle school and high school band?**

The biggest surface difference is the marching band and auditions for concert band since your student will now be in class with all band students grades 9-12, unlike at TMS where they were only in grade-level ensembles. Everyone in the band participates in marching band, which includes July sectionals (your specific students instrument group practice at a designated location) and an August band camp in which they learn how to perform their show for the fall. The marching part of the class lasts until mid-October when all students audition for band and chair placements in one of two concert bands, the Wind Symphony and the Symphonic Band.

Additional difference will be found in the close, family-like atmosphere created by spending longer times together and working hard as a group to achieve excellence. For parents, you will also find an active parent group that volunteers, known as the Band Boosters to help support the kids throughout the year and often find their own long-lasting connections through participation.

Finally, communication is constant and ongoing since we have so many things going on. Make sure you are receiving the weekly Band Booster Newsletter and follow them on Facebook Charger Band, Sussex, WI.

- **How does this all work? My child is uncertain about how they will succeed and I don't know how to help prepare them!**

To quote Aaron Rodgers, the first step is to R-E-L-A-X ☺. We understand that transitions are stressful for humans and the transition to HHS is a big one. Additionally, your student might be concerned that they know nothing about how to march and play or they heard it was hard etc. One thing your student will hear repeatedly from me is that nothing is difficult, it's just unfamiliar and this is no different. There are many students in the band who thought they would be terrible at it and with a bit of time and effort were able to achieve beyond their imagination!

Please encourage your student to be engaged, aware of times/schedule and responsibilities and to put forth their best effort, whatever that is. When they feel discouraged or daunted, help them to keep perspective and remind them that this is a growth activity – if they could do everything perfectly already, they'd be bored!

- **What will my student need to participate in marching band?**

They will need to have **music for the show**, as well as **pep music**, all of which they will get from their student Section Leader prior to the end of the school year. For camp, they will receive a set of **coordinates/moves** for the actual show which they should have at all times as well as a **lyre and flipbook**. If you didn't receive these items when you purchased/rented your instrument, please have them purchased from an area music store (or online) prior to camp. They will also need **athletic footwear** and **comfortable, loose-fitting clothing** for band camp. Please note - no matter how hot it may get, we are still subject to school dress code so, no shoes, no shirt (or not enough shirt ☺), no service! Bring plenty of **water and sunscreen** and **bug spray** is a good idea for after sundown. **Sunglasses and hats** complete your student's stylish get-up!

- **How/When/Where will they practice?**

Over the summer, students practice in their student-led group of like-instruments called sectionals. Your student's Section Leader will visit TMS prior to the end of school for a meet and greet, to hand out music and then is responsible for scheduling these practices. Please feel free to reach out to these student leaders as necessary to help clarify anything that is unclear. If for some reason you do not hear from your student's Section Leader, please contact Mr. Waite right away.

Sectionals are held at the Section Leader's house or a local park if the band room is not open. We advise our student leaders to have an adult involved so that everyone can feel comfortable with the atmosphere. If you are not sure, please feel free to ask the Section Leader directly or again, contact Mr. Waite.

The goal is to familiarize each student with the music prior to band camp. Camp is primarily for learning the drill and putting music with it so it is essential that music is learned and committed to memory prior to band camp. These sectionals are the vehicle we use to accomplish this goal. Each section should hold between 6 – 8 sectional practices and students are encouraged to come to as many as possible, or practice individually when it is not possible. While attendance is **strongly encouraged**, it is not required. However, playing tests will come due for students early in the school year so the more they do over the summer, the easier the fall becomes when they must deal with a new school and heightened amounts of homework, activities and tests.

- **What Happens *after* marching band?**

While the biggest difference between middle school band and high school band is the marching component, it bears remembering that marching band only takes up 6 weeks of the 36-week school year. The rest of the year will look remarkably similar to TMS with a few key differences.

Concert Band: The week after State Marching Band Championships, all students play an audition for with Mr. Waite. They will receive music 3 weeks prior to give them time to prepare and are then

placed both in a band (we have 2 separate, skill-based ensembles at HHS) and in a chair placement based on their audition. The Symphonic Band consists *primarily* of 9th and 10th graders, studies level-appropriate music, and continued skill development. The Wind Symphony consists of *primarily* 11th and 12th grade students and studies and performs the highest levels of music throughout the year. Since they are audition based, the students with the highest level of skill and preparation are the ones selected for the Wind Symphony. Every year some 9th and 10th graders have advanced quickly in their skill development and make the Wind Symphony but please know that most of them will start in Symphonic Band. We encourage students to look at auditions not as an event, but as simply a snapshot of where they are in their musical development at that moment. Excellence is not an event, but a process! Rehearsals and concerts will seem very familiar to your student.

Jazz Ensembles: For students interested in being a part of the jazz program, we offer two for-credit ensembles. There is a place for any student who is interested in learning about and performing jazz! Jazz 1 meets Wednesday evenings after marching band is over from 3-4:30 PM and is an audition only ensemble. Auditions are typically held in May of the previous year. Jazz 2 also meets Wednesday after marching season from 5–6:30 PM and is comprised of students who auditioned but were not selected for Jazz 1 or any other student interested in being a part of the program without the stress of auditioning. Students who did an audition will be given preference on part assignment but all are welcome.

Trips: The HHS bands have traveled extensively since the turn of the century and will continue to do so as an amazing experience meant to enhance their musical education. Previous destinations include, London, New York, Orlando, and Boston. Additionally, the jazz bands take a weekend trip to the Dells and UW-Eau Claire for the continent's largest jazz festival every other year. Trips are on a voluntary basis only and the costs associated with them are always offered with fundraising opportunities to help offset cost if desired.

Memorial Day Parades: There is more specific info to follow, but this is our only full group community service each year so we expect each student to participate. It may interfere with cookout/cabin/boating plans for one day, but honoring our military members who made the ultimate sacrifice is a worthwhile reason to cause a little inconvenience.

Graduation Band: Each year, the band is asked to provide entrance and exit music for the graduation ceremony. Since a large majority of our Wind Symphony students are graduating themselves, we have the Symphonic Band provide the music. It is a good opportunity to see where they will be in a few years and a great way to give back to the seniors who helped to make their band experience more meaningful. This is typically the Saturday after the last day of school so please plan accordingly.