

Warren Middle School

Band Handbook

2022-2023



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Warren Middle School

811 S. Bois d'Arc – Forney, TX 75126

School: 469-762-4250 / Band Office: ext. 49550

Fax: 469-762-4251

HOW TO CONTACT THE BAND STAFF

We have many students but please know our goal is to respond to every message in a timely manner.

You may e-mail us at the following address:

Cody Russell, Head Band Director – cwrussell@forneyisd.net

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Additional Contacts:

Cody Newman, Director of Bands – Forney HS – cnewman@forneyisd.net

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Melissa Behne, Band Director – Rhea Intermediate School – mhbehne@forneyisd.net

We are not always near our office phone. We may use conference time for an emergency trip to the music store and/or other band-related errands. In general, we are teaching every period of the school day. Regardless of what time you call, you may always leave a message on our voice mail or send an email. We will get back to you!

Warren Band Office and Voice Mail: 469-762-4250 ext. 49550

Warren Main Office: 469-762-4250 **Fax in Main Office:** 469-762-4251

Warren Band Website: www.warrenmsband.com **Facebook Page:** Warren Middle School Band

The band website is updated regularly. Information regarding various band events will be posted in addition to any forms that may be needed throughout the year such as objective sheets and practice records. We also put as many recordings of songs that we are playing on it for student use! The directors will also send out email-updates throughout the year as deadlines and events approach. This year we are going to try to implement some kind of texting process as well. **Please make sure that we have a good email address and cell number.** Reminders and updates are vital. When information is sent home with your student, an email update with this information will follow. If you haven't received an email from us by September, then we do not have it or it is documented incorrectly!

PHILOSOPHY:

The Warren Middle School Band, with the support of our principals, operates under the following philosophy:

We believe that all students can learn to play a musical instrument to the level which represents their ability. Just as music enriches student's lives with opportunities for self-expression, creativity, emotional and aesthetic development, membership and participation in this organization will be an opportunity for students to learn valuable life skills such as responsibility, commitment, goal setting, self-discipline, teamwork and leadership.

Music is an important element in the quality of everyday life – constantly around us and due to its prevalence in our society, the teaching of music is recognized as an important part of the traditional curriculum. Our goal is to provide the very best atmosphere for students to achieve the goals that are set before them.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR:

Rules ensure that students establish and maintain a tradition of excellence and protect students and equipment.

1. Do not interfere with the Director's ability to teach or a student's ability to learn.
2. No gum, candy, food or non-water drinks in the Band Hall.
3. Students are not to touch or handle any equipment/instrument that they are not assigned to play.
4. All required materials are to be brought to class each day. Do not bring non-band materials to your seat.
5. Students must be in their chair with their instrument/supplies at a designated time for class.
6. Students should not leave their instrument unattended (especially outside of the band rooms.)
7. Instruments are to be clearly labeled with student's name and may be stored in their assigned band locker during the school day. Other non-band class materials are not allowed in the instrument storage areas.
8. As a security precaution, only band students are allowed in the band hall.
9. You are to take your instrument home daily. They are to be dropped off before school and picked up immediately after school. Athletes should make arrangements when practices do not allow Band Hall access.
10. If it becomes necessary to take your instrument to a repair shop, please bring a note from home. We normally are able to provide a temporary instrument so bring all of your materials/supplies to class so you can play.
11. *Consequences for violation of the above policies can include: reminders, loss of privileges, teacher/parent conferences, office referrals and even removal from the band program.*

BAND GRADING POLICY:

We take grading seriously and do not give blanket grades. Each student earns their own grade. Students should easily make above a 90%. Any average lower reflects a serious lack of home practice and/or performance attendance.

60% Participation Grades: Is the student in class with supplies and allowing others to learn?

40% Performance Grades: Specifically Electric Pass-Offs, Sectionals and Public Performances. All rehearsals and performances outside of school are graded [see Attendance Policy]. The students have to show mastery and perform publically. We throw in as many chair tests and/or playing assignments as we can to add grade opportunities.

BAND BINDER & SUPPLIES:

The band binder is a 1-inch **BLACK** 3 ring binder to keep all band music, papers and method books. Dividers (5) are needed to organize the music/papers/books. Each black binder needs a pencil bag to hold a mechanical pencil and a highlighter. The supply lists state the specific items each instrument requires and are to be brought to class daily just like any other class. There are specific supplies we give when instruments are chosen.

ELECTRONIC PASS-OFFS (E.P.O.s):

Practice time is essential to your child's development and success in band. We are integrating technology in band at Warren through submitting recordings made on Chromebooks or any device capable. Students will be asked to regularly submit recordings weekly. Please note that the grade reflects the number of DAYS practiced not the number of recordings submitted. These weekly EPO grades break down this way: 3 days of recordings = 100, 2 days of recordings = 80, 1 day of recordings = 50. More than 3 days earns bonuses applied to previous low EPO grades as well as team points.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Any activity that involves music is considered curricular. Full rehearsals, small group sectionals, performances, clinics and competitions are part of the course requirements and are graded activities.

Band is a group activity with very few individual opportunities. It is a “team” that does not have a “bench or sideline” to adjust and take pressure off of the performers. Every student has a part to play. Every rehearsal, sectional and performance is **mandatory**. Even the optional extra opportunities offered to the Advanced band members become **mandatory** for those students who choose to commit to them. (Jazz Band, Recruiting Ensemble etc.)

All absences are to be avoided. Schedule conflicts and known absences are to be made known immediately to a Band Director so that there is time to discuss and possibly work out a solution. All non-FISD related absences are subject to a grade adjustment at the discretion of the Director on an individual basis results ranging from a grade lower, to a non-grade entry or even a zero. Remember that there are no blanket grades in the Warren Band. Even though extra Practice Journal sessions and tutorials can improve student averages, nothing can ever take the place of a missed group rehearsal or performance. In some cases, a student may be assigned a different part or role leading up to an unavoidable absence. Many students are the ONLY ones playing their specific part of the music and all are important!

Performances are the center piece and focus of our program. When a performance is missed, the students do not get to experience the product of their hard work. It is like a chain. Every member is important so be there!

How do we avoid absences? It is simple. We give out dates/times as early as we can and you check your calendars and work around it. Contact us immediately when you can't clear a date. We then try to work around YOU. THIS FORMULA ALMOST ALWAYS WORKS! Letting us know the week of a performance doesn't leave enough time to adjust or cover missing parts. PLEASE do not hesitate to let us know in advance – we welcome a challenge to resolve!

Please let us restate that when your child misses class, rehearsal, or a performance, no amount of practice or tutoring can truly take the place of that group activity or group instruction. We can't give them a “worksheet” or “reading assignment.” So please keep that in mind when scheduling doctor/dentist appointments. (Let us mention now that getting braces put on or removed right before a performance is disastrous for woodwind and brass players!!)

BAND PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS:

-CONCERT BAND

The Concert Band consists of second AND first-year players. Most of the Forney Band students start band in 6th grade. New players are required to come to a Kick Start Camp in the summer. Keep in mind that this is a preparatory camp designed to prepare them for participation in full band. We will separate them by first & second year players at first but eventually they will all play together daily. Electronic Pass-Offs and Private lessons [see Private Lesson Program] play an integral part in the efficient and high-level development of musicians. Jazz Band is available in November (optional).

UNIFORM: Band Shirt and Long Khaki Pants (nice) for the entire year.

CONCERT BAND ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

Full Band Performances (Fall, Winter & Spring)

No outside of school rehearsals

Jazz Band (Optional ensemble that meets outside of school starting late November)

Solo & Ensemble Contest (February)

Band Festival Contest (Late Spring)

- SYMPHONIC BAND

The Symphonic Band is the sub-non-varsity band. They compete in UIL Concert and Sightreading Contest and are encouraged to compete in All-Region Band. They are continuing to grow in their musicianship to help prepare them for high school band. Passing all classes with a 70 or higher is required for the All-Region audition and performance. Electronic Pass-Offs and Private lessons [see Private Lesson Program] become more specific as new opportunities and challenges are offered in year two. Jazz Band is available in November (optional). ***Please note that if the demands and expectations in playing and behavior are not met and if parent and administration help are unsuccessful, a student may be moved down to the Concert Band.***

UNIFORM(S): Band Shirt and Long Khaki Pants (nice) for Pep Rallies, Fall Concert, and Winter Concert. Competitive concerts and performances will be in ALL BLACK [see Formal Band Uniforms].

SYMPHONIC BAND ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

Full Band Performances (Fall, Winter, & Spring)
Jazz Band (Optional ensemble that meets outside of school starting late November)
Solo & Ensemble Contest (February)
All Region Band Audition (Optional but includes required Fall sectionals)
UIL preparatory clinics/rehearsals/pre-concerts (March)
UIL Concert & Sightreading Contest (April)
Band Festival Contests (May)

-WIND SYMPHONY

The Wind Symphony is the non-varsity band. They compete in UIL Concert and Sightreading Contest and are encouraged to compete in All-Region Band. They are continuing to grow in their musicianship to help prepare them for high school band. Passing all classes with a 70 or higher is required for the All-Region audition and performance. Electronic Pass-Offs and Private lessons [see Private Lesson Program] become more specific as new opportunities and challenges are offered in year two. Jazz Band is available in November (optional). ***Please note that if the demands and expectations in playing and behavior are not met and if parent and administration help are unsuccessful, a student may be moved down to the Symphonic Band.***

UNIFORM(S): Band Shirt and Long Khaki Pants (nice) for Pep Rallies, Fall Concert, and Winter Concert. Competitive concerts and performances will be in ALL BLACK with Boys specifically wearing a black long sleeve button down shirt as we will provide a tie [see Formal Band Uniforms].

WIND SYMPHONY ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

Full Band Performances (Fall, Winter, & Spring)
All Region Band Audition (Optional but includes required Fall sectionals)
Jazz Band (Optional ensemble that meets outside of school starting late November)
Solo and Ensemble Contests (Feb)
UIL Sectionals (Feb-April)
UIL preparatory clinics/rehearsals/pre-concerts (March)
UIL Concert & Sightreading Contest (April)
Band Festival Contests (May)

-WIND ENSEMBLE

The Wind Ensemble is the varsity band. These students have proven their desire to do more than the normal amount of work and push themselves above and beyond the average player. They compete in UIL Concert and Sightreading Contest. Continued Electronic Pass-Offs are extremely vital to growth musically. They have REQUIRED weekly sectionals and are REQUIRED to compete in All-Region Band. They are REQUIRED to go to the Solo & Ensemble Contest and are REQUIRED to maintain a 70 or above average in EVERY class each six weeks. They are continuing to grow in their musicianship to help prepare them for high school band and are expected to participate in Private Lessons [see Private Lesson Program] as the requirements of membership increase in this highly competitive ensemble. The Warren Recruiting Ensemble is also available to Wind Ensemble Members to perform at various events to promote future membership and musical enjoyment. Jazz Band is optional. *Please note that if the demands and expectations in playing and behavior are not met and if parent and administration help are unsuccessful, a student may be moved down to the Wind Symphony.*

UNIFORM(S): Band Shirt and Long Khaki Pants (nice) for Pep Rallies, recruiting, Fall Concert, and Winter Concert. Competitive concerts and performances will be in Formalwear [see Formal Band Uniforms].

WIND ENSEMBLE ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

Concert Performances (Fall, Winter, & Spring)
Weekly Sectionals [see Sectionals]
All Region Band Audition, Clinics & Concert (Aug-January)
Solo and Ensemble Contest (Feb)
UIL preparatory clinics/rehearsals/pre-concerts (March)
UIL Concert & Sightreading Contest (April)
Band Festival Contests (May)
Recruiting Ensemble Performances (optional – Elementary Fall Festivals & Holiday Tour)
Jazz Band (Optional ensemble that meets outside of school starting late November)

JAZZ BAND:

The WMS Jazz Band is an optional performing ensemble available. We could have as many as 2 Jazz Ensembles. If we have multiple, one would be audition based and the second would be open to all. Rehearsals will be before (or after) school a few times a week depending on the given demands already in place by the main performing groups. Rehearsals will start in late November with a definite performance at the Winter & Spring Concert and a festival competition in the Spring. The size and performance capabilities will vary from year to year.

SECTIONALS:

Unlike beginning band, advanced band students are placed in a large advanced mixed class. There is still technique and instruction that require the small “same instrument” rehearsal setting. Sectionals help us continue advanced and instrument specific teaching that we started the first year. These very important small rehearsals and will be scheduled before or after school from 7:30-8:20am or 4:05-4:55pm. They are held most of the year. Percussion Fall sectionals are Tuesdays 4:15-5:45pm. Indoor Percussion is also Tuesdays starting late November but will be from 4:30-7pm. We set the other sectionals based on the instruments played and any major conflicts within the individual groups. These times are subject to change when new conflicts & needs arise.

*In the Fall, the woodwind and brass sectionals focus mainly on All-Region Band audition preparation and are required by Wind Ensemble members. Wind Symphony & Symphonic Band members who choose to audition for All-Region are also required to attend the sectionals. After the audition, Wind Ensemble continue with ensemble music.

All sectionals are mandatory and graded. Any missed sectionals are to be made up by attending a different instrument sectional before the next scheduled sectional or a 30min tutoring session with a Director.

*In the Spring, the sectionals continue but focus mainly on UIL Concert & Sightreading Contest preparation and are required by Wind Ensemble members. Wind Symphony will also have Spring UIL combined Sectionals.

Again – all sectionals are mandatory and graded. Any missed sectionals are to be made up by attending a different instrument sectional BEFORE THE NEXT SCHEDULED SECTIONAL or a 30min tutorial with a director.

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS:

As stated specifically in this handbook, students are required to participate in all performance related events they are enrolled in for the band. Please understand that when a student chooses an optional performance group, the activities involved then become mandatory. There are academic eligibility requirements for some events. All-Region Band falls into this eligibility category (Marching Band in high school.) It is our hope that participation in band will motivate students to pass! We will do what we can to help your child pass classes if needed. We work hand in hand with the WMS staff regarding tutoring times and there are usually more than one academic tutoring opportunities.

PRIVATE LESSON PROGRAM:

Warren Middle School and Forney ISD are very fortunate to be able to provide individual music instruction through our Private Lesson Program. We are committed to provide the very best learning experience for each student. One of those opportunities is for a student to study privately with some of the finest graduate and professional musicians in the DFW area. This private instruction benefits both the individual and the overall program in that it can be closely geared to a student's developmental needs. With such an individualized approach, it is possible to develop a child's talent to his/her maximum proficiency at a faster pace. ***IT IS NOT REMEDIATION OR TUTORING. Please consider lessons!***

There is a full staff of professional teachers approved by the Forney School District for every instrument available to us during, before, and after school day. The private lessons are approximately 30 minutes long, once a week, and usually taken during the student's band period in practice rooms, separate from the class. Private lessons will not interfere or conflict with other academic courses at WMS. Lessons held during band class, though convenient, may be shorter than 30min due to time constraints and lessons outside of school can occasionally exceed 30min. Either way, they lesson fee is the same. The key to success is to start early and continue throughout the year (and even the summer). Your child's grade will not be negatively affected by the use or misuse of the lesson program.

We strongly encourage that all students enroll in our private lessons program. ***It is the expectation and desire that all students in the WIND ENSEMBLE will be enrolled in private lessons.*** The cost of Private Lessons is \$20 per half hour and is paid directly to the lesson instructor. Financial assistance is available to help offset the cost of the lessons, and will be given on a consistent, weekly basis. The financial aid is paid directly from the band boosters to the instructor, effectively lowering your weekly cost of lessons. Financial aid is negotiated with the Head Band Director.

Our Private Lesson Program offers a great opportunity to all of the students, and we want to make sure that every student who is interested in lessons has the opportunity to receive this individual instruction.

Students participating in private lessons are expected to:

1. Be fully prepared for each lesson
2. Bring a pencil and all required books and materials
3. Notify the instructor at least 24hrs in advance of a lesson cancellation to avoid payment!
4. Bring the money to each lesson (checks made payable to the instructor)
5. Be respectful! Some drive a long way and rely on these checks as their sole source of income.

BAND FEES:

Every band member will be asked to pay a \$75 BAND FEE we spend on band spirit shirts, trip meals, all-region audition fees, solo & ensemble fees & social events. Whatever is not covered by the fee will be paid for with Band Booster fundraised money. \$75 Band Fees will be paid online with a credit card. If you use a school owned instrument there is **ADDITIONAL** annual \$50 RENTAL FEE in Skyward [see Instruments & Equipment.] **BAND RENTAL FEES should be added in Skyward October 1st.** (Percussion will have an additional Indoor Percussion Fee in late Fall (that amount changes due to exact uniform costs.)

INSTRUMENTS & EQUIPMENT:

All instruments cases and supply items are to be clearly labeled. Most of the students are expected to furnish their own instruments. Exceptions are oboe, bassoon, bass clarinet, tenor sax, bari sax, french horn, euphonium and tuba. These are rented from Warren for a Skyward fee of \$50. Supplies and mouthpieces for most of these instruments are NOT provided by the school. All bari sax, french horn, euphonium and tuba players that use Fisd bus transportation will be issued an instrument to keep at home for practice if possible. **The rental fee DOES NOT cover damages from misuse or abuse of the instrument. The student will be responsible for any repairs that are needed to return the instrument to its issued condition.** Warren MS reserves the right to recall any loaned instrument in instances of misuse, lack of practice or evidence of conduct unworthy of such responsibility. Rental fees are non-refundable and are not pro-rated. NO STUDENT WILL EVER BE REMOVED FROM BAND BECAUSE OF MONEY ISSUES. We will do everything we can to find a way to let students join the Warren Band! Contact us!

FORMAL BAND UNIFORMS:

All students can wear a "Festive Hat" for the Winter Concert in December. Formal uniforms start in the Spring.

CONCERT BLACK:

Concert & Symphonic Bands will wear ALL BLACK clothes. Every single visible clothing item will be all black (shirt, pants, shoes, dress, socks etc.) This is supposed to be dress up types of clothing. Modest dresses & blouses, button up shirts, dress pants, dress shoes. Avoid black jeans, leggings, tennis shoes, t-shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies etc.

Wind Symphony will wear ALL BLACK clothes as well. Every single visible clothing item will be all black (shirt, pants, shoes, dress, socks etc.) This is supposed to be dress up types of clothing. Modest dresses & blouses, button up shirts, dress pants, dress shoes. Avoid black jeans, leggings, tennis shoes, t-shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies etc.

*Wind Symphony BOYS will be provided a Silver Neck Tie and are required to wear black long sleeve dress shirts.

FORMALWEAR: Wind Ensemble will wear formals provided by the school at no cost. Footwear is not provided.

-BOYS: a tux shirt, bowtie, & vest are provided by the school. You must provide: black dress pants, all black LONG socks and all black nice dress shoes (I strongly recommend an all-white undershirt as well)

-GIRL PERCUSSION: (Moving equipment difficult in a dress) Girl percussion are provided a tux shirt, rose tie, cummerbund, (& female tux pants if needed.) You must provide: all black LONG socks & close toed black dress shoes (& dress pants if you prefer to buy your own. Please wear an all white tank top or cami underneath)

-GIRLS: a black dress is provided by the school for the ww/brass girls. You must provide: black dress shoes.

Vests are dry clean only. Dresses and shirts can be laundered. We do ask that you turn them in clean in May.

BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL BAND TUTORIALS:

Band tutorials are one-on-one practice sessions with a Director. The homogenous 6th grade beginner class structure & strong private lesson program helps students not generally need much tutoring. Occasionally a Director might see a specific need in a student and ask that student to schedule a tutorial. A student may feel frustrated and want a director to focus on them by requesting tutoring & some might want some extra help to get ahead. In these cases, the student and director will find a time to have a tutorial. Tutorials can be scheduled before or after school for 30min. (Note: *As long as students are actually practicing and a band director is around, the band hall is available for individual practice before and after school. This privilege can be taken away at any time if it is abused.*)

BAND SOCIALS:

We expect the Warren Band member to work hard together so we also take time to have fun together as well. We work with parents and students throughout the year to plan social events. Some will combine 7th and 8th grade and some may be separate. The occasional separation lowers the number of students being monitored and also lets each class bond. The socials will have at least one band director and a few parents to help run the event and monitor kids.

BAND EVENTS DEFINED:

Concert: A concert is a non-competitive public performance. There is no admission charge. Family and community members are encouraged to attend. These performances are a state-mandated part of our curriculum. We are also required to teach the performers and audience members “Concert Etiquette.” This informs them of how to behave and act as a listener. For this reason, all beginning band members are to stay at concerts after their performance (they play first) and listen to the Concert, Symphonic, and Honors Bands perform their portion of the Fall, Winter and Spring Concerts. We also have receptions with snacks following these concerts. Students will be asked to bring reception items.

Contest or Festival: These are competitive performances that are judged and awards are given. There a solo and ensemble in the Spring. All 3 bands also compete in at least one of these full band events per year in April and/or May.

Clinic: A clinic is a band rehearsal where a well-known and highly respected band director is hired to work with the band students usually in preparation for UIL in the Spring for the advanced bands. They are great opportunities for the students and band staff to be exposed to great teaching! These clinics can be held after school but not normally.

All-Region Band: This is an “all-star” band made up of students from the entire region (multiple school districts.) Students who have had one year of band can compete. The students are given music and scales to prepare for an audition in November. These students from our entire area of the metroplex audition identifying the top players in the region to form 3 full MS bands. Those who make a band have a full day of clinic rehearsals to prepare an entire concert performance that same evening in January. Sectionals and private lessons are essential in ensuring success.

Making the All-Region Band is one of the highest achievements for a middle school band member.

UIL Concert & Sightreading Contest: This state sanctioned annual judged event occurs in April for Advanced Bands. The Wind Ensemble, Wind Symphony, & Symphonic Bands compete. The band prepares 3 pieces from a state list and also plays a piece they have never seen before (sightreading). In the Summer of 2019, eligibility requirements were removed from this UIL event. Every able member is allowed to participate.