

NORTH HILLS MARCHING BAND



STUDENT HANDBOOK

2024-2025 SEASON

FORWARD

The North Hills Marching Band Student Handbook creates a structure for all events and activities for the high school marching band. The North Hills Marching Band Student Handbook is an extension of the North Hills High School Student Handbook and is meant to provide valuable information about the marching band. Parents and students should be familiar with the handbook and review it to start the season as a primary source of procedures of the North Hills Marching Band.

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BAND HISTORY

The North Hills Marching Band has a history of nearly 70 years. Known as “*Thee Band of Pride, Tradition and Excellence*,” the present structure was created when the communities of Ross and West View combined to create the North Hills School District in 1953. The first director of the marching band was Mr. James Caruso (1946-1960). Former Directors have included: Warren Mercer (1961-1989), Areta Kalogeras (1989-2008), and David Matthews (2008-2010). The band has been under the direction of Len Lavelle, band director at North Hills High School, since 2011.

The North Hills has a long and accomplished reputation and is generally recognized as one of the top high school band programs in the country. The marching band has performed for many prestigious events and earned numerous awards, trophies, and recognition throughout its history.

ORGANIZATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The marching band is an extracurricular activity for students in grades 8-12 of the North Hills School District. The marching band allows students an opportunity to learn a wide variety of music, participate in many public performances, and grow as an individual while serving the North Hills community.

The marching band is an extension of our curricular offerings. **A requisite of instrumentalist participation in the marching band is that the student be enrolled in band or orchestra, our instrumental music courses, during the school day.** Members of the Flagline and Majorettes provide a visual enhancement aspect of the musical performances and are included by audition.

The marching band performs at all North Hills varsity football games, the North Hills Band Festival, other area band festivals, and community events North Hills and the Pittsburgh area. Each year the marching band represents the North Hills School District as part of the annual Music Department Tour.

In addition, the North Hills Marching Band has been invited to perform outside of the Pittsburgh area in events including the Presidential Inaugural Parade, Chicago St. Patrick’s Day Parade, New York City St. Patrick’s Day Parade, Washington D.C Cherry Blossom Parade, nationally televised NCAA Basketball games and Main Street of Walt Disney World. The band has finished in first place and received “Best Overall Band” at adjudication festivals throughout the country.

The North Hills Marching Band is a traditional, “Big Ten” style marching band. Trademark features of the group are its precision marching, high march step, and commitment to high-level musical performance.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Student attendance at rehearsals and performances is essential to maintain the unity in the group and high standards in performance. Therefore, students are needed to attend all scheduled rehearsals and performances. Punctuality is also an important aspect of being a responsible band member. For decades our students have lived: “If you are on time, you are late.”

Rookie Nights and Summer Band Attendance (all June and July rehearsals) - Included as excused absences during the summer band practices are family vacations, camps, etc. Sport schedules may be accommodated through collaborating with the directors and coaches. Optional activities should be scheduled around rehearsals. **An absence request should be made in advance for an absence to be considered excused: nhbandattendance@gmail.com**

Pre-Band Camp and Band Camp Attendance - Attendance at Pre-Band Camp and Band Camp activities is mandatory for all students. Please make summer arrangements around these activities. Pre-Band Camp and Band Camp are scheduled a year in advance each season.

Rookie Scheduling - All efforts are made to accommodate rookies as they become aware of the schedule. Contact Mr. Lavelle to discuss any conflicts so that we can reach a solution together.

Excused Absence - During the season, a conflict with a scheduled rehearsal or event may be granted an excused absence with prior request to the director through the attendance email. Examples may include competing in WPIAL events, other school events, and once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. Sport schedules may be accommodated through collaborating with the directors and coaches. Please discuss these with the directors as soon as they arise, preferable before the season begins.

Unexcused Absence - Anything not included above can be considered an unexcused absence. Work is not considered an excused absence. Students that work should inform their employer of their obligation to the band and in most cases the employer will be happy to work around the band schedule. Other examples of unexcused absences include rock concerts, attending sporting events, homework, etc. Unexcused tardiness may be considered 1/2 an unexcused absence.

Consequences - Students that have an unexcused absence from a scheduled practice or performance may be ineligible to participate in the next scheduled performance or can be dismissed from the group at the director’s discretion. If a student is declared ineligible to perform, he/she will be expected to attend the event in full uniform and perform with the band in the stands but not in the field activities, if applicable.

Illness - In case of student illness or emergency, please reach out as soon as possible. **Generally, if a student is to be excused from rehearsal for illness, they would have to be home sick from school either the day of, or the day after, rehearsal.**

Attendance Requests - should be sent to nhbandattendance@gmail.com in advance. **Always include date and reason for the request in the initial email.**

Cooperation - It is our desire for our students to have a positive school and band experience. We are all here to support our students. Please talk with us about conflicts as soon as they arise so that we may come to the best resolution.

If there is something we can do to help, please ask!

BEHAVIOR POLICY

Marching Band members are expected to treat other band members, directors, parents, and any other persons or property they may come in contact as a member of the group, with respect.

Band members are expected to follow all North Hills School District policies. These policies can be found in the North Hills School District Student Handbook. Infractions may be referred to the district level with the house principal.

It is a **privilege** to be a part of “*Thee Band of Pride Tradition and Excellence.*” **Students may be removed from participation in the marching band at any time, at the directors’ discretion, for repeated behavior infractions, repeated performance policy infractions, or any serious infraction of the school behavior code.**

PERFORMANCE POLICY INFRACTIONS

Students should report to the meet location, in uniform, prior to the designated meeting time for a performance. Students should be ready to step off for performance or to board buses for an event.

Students may be asked to sit out a performance after inspection for any of the following reasons, as examples:

1. Uniform: wearing the uniform in an inappropriate manner, uniform looks unkempt, stained, or wrinkled, shoes are not properly cleaned, long hair is not tucked into the band hat, visible jewelry, chewing gum, etc.
2. Preparation: do not have their instrument or another item needed to perform, failure to complete and return required forms or information, etc.
3. Performance: inability to satisfactorily perform aspects of the drill, music, or routine; inability to stay in step for extended periods of time, are unprepared due to extended absence, etc.
4. Absence from a practice prior to a performance
5. Behavior/attendance infractions of any type

FLAG AND MAJORETTE CONTRACT

The **Flag and Majorette Assessment Rubric** is used to select students for these sections of the Marching Band. Students are evaluated based on an Instructional Assessment (Adapted from the Penn State Blue Band), and Performances Skills. Flags and Majorettes are also governed by the Flag and Majorette Assessment Rubric throughout the season. If a member is earning a score of 2 in any category of Instructional Assessment, the following protocol will be followed if the behavior continues: meeting with director, meeting with director and parent and notification of warning to principal, removal from group.

TRAVEL/TRANSPORTATION

Students are expected to travel with the band to and from all activities.

In very specific circumstances when it is necessary for a parent to drive a student to or from a band activity where group transportation is provided, the following policy will apply:

1. Prior written notification must be received and approved by the director.
2. Students will only be permitted to leave with parents or an adult authorized by the parents. Parents must meet the student at the band buses and a director **MUST** see the parents and student leave together.

UNIFORMS

These are the essential **summer uniform** items you should have:

1. Summer Band polo shirt, worn tucked in – purchased from band
2. Black twill/cotton pants (no jeans or stretch pants) – provided by family
3. Black socks – provided by family
4. Black belt – provided by family
5. Clean and polished white marching bucks – purchased from band
A damp sponge can be used for cleaning. White shoe polish can be used to keep shoes in good condition. Mr. Clean Magic Erasers work well for removing scuffs.

These are the essential **winter uniform** items you should have:

1. Band jacket and pants – provided by band
2. White socks – provided by family
3. White gloves – purchased from band
4. Polished white marching bucks – purchased from band
A damp sponge can be used for cleaning. White shoe polish can be used to keep shoes in good condition. Mr. Clean Magic Erasers work well for removing scuffs.
5. Band T-shirt – provided by band
6. Raincoat and raincoat bag – provided by band
7. Hat and Hat box – provided by band
8. Garment Bag – provided by band

HAT

The hat is to be worn for as follows:

1. Long hair is neatly arranged so that it fits up inside the hat
2. The brim of the hat is level with the eyebrows
3. The chin strap should rest on the chin or under the chin

The hat is to be cared for as follows:

1. Store your hat in the provided box
2. Please put your name inside your hat on a piece of tape.
3. You should take a dry white cloth and wipe your hat off, inside and outside, after every performance.

COAT AND PANTS

The coat is to be worn as follows:

1. Every coat should have a sweat collar snapped inside the jacket neck. The neck collar should be hooked shut.

2. If your coat fits properly your sleeves should touch the wrist area of your gloves when your instrument is up and you should have room to breathe. You should not be able to see the side adjustment zippers on your pants if your coat fits properly.
3. You should always wear a band shirt or plain white t-shirt, sweatshirt, or long sleeve underwear shirt under your jacket. Sleeveless shirts, tank tops and colored t-shirts are not permitted. Sleeveless shirts allow under the arm stains to occur on the jacket.

The pants are to be worn as follows:

1. The pants will fit high up on the chest. They should be adjusted so that the bottom of the pants touches the tops of the shoes, about 2 inches from the ground. The pants should not drag on the ground.
2. Please hem your pants to meet the requirements above using thread. Do not use hemming tape or adhesive. NEVER CUT UNIFORMS TO MAKE ALTERATIONS.
3. The sides adjust with zippers and the length can be adjusted with the suspenders. A SAFETY PIN SHOULD BE USE TO KEEP BUCKELS IN PLACE – THEY WILL SLIP DOWN.
4. Shorts, long underwear or sweatpants may be worn under the pants, but they should not be visible at all when you move, stand still or mark time. JEANS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO BE WORN UNDER THE UNIFORM.

The coat and pants are to be cared for as follows:

1. The uniform should be hung up after every performance.
2. It is often a good idea to turn the uniform inside out and let it air out before you put it in the garment bag.
3. When uniforms get wet hang them to dry as soon as possible.
4. UNIFORMS ARE DRY-CLEAN ONLY. It is suggested that they are cleaned after every two performances or after getting wet.
5. The sweat collar can be washed in mild detergent and drip-dried.
6. A plastic or a good wooden hanger for your uniform.
7. If your uniform is in need of repairs or mending bring that to the attention of the uniform chairman. Uniform buttons are available but should be attached with button thread, which is much stronger than traditional thread.

UNIFORM ACCESSORIES

The gloves are to be worn as follows:

1. All sections wear white gloves except for the percussion section. White gloves may be purchased for \$3.00 a pair at any band practice.
2. Woodwinds must cut the fingers out at the knuckle
3. Gloves should be cleaned before performances: machine wash in cold water. We suggest line drying to avoid shrinking.
4. It is recommended that students carry an extra pair of gloves

Shoes and socks are to be worn and cared for as follows:

1. Students must provide themselves with white marching bucks. A shoe order day is scheduled every year for your convenience.
2. Shoes must be cleaned for performance.
3. Students wear plain white socks with the winter uniform and plain black socks with the summer uniform.

Raincoat, garment bag and headband information:

1. Students will be issued a raincoat and garment bag.
2. Students may wear a solid red, white or black headband or gloves at cold weather games.
3. The garment bag is for proper storage of your uniform and is not to be used outside of marching band activities. Please do not put adhesive tape on your garment bag.
4. The raincoat can be wiped down with a damp cloth and hung to dry. **When the raincoat gets wet hang it up immediately to prevent mold.**
5. Please put your name on a piece of tape on your raincoat bag.
6. Keep your raincoat with your garment bag during marching season to not forget it.
7. During the offseason store your raincoat open.

MISCELLANEOUS UNIFORM INFORMATION

1. **Financial assistance is available necessary purchases, if needed. Please contact a director.**
2. You are not permitted to eat or drink in uniform other than refreshments and snacks that are provided.
3. Do not bring valuables to performances.
4. Makeup should be understated or not worn when in uniform.
5. Nail polish must be removed for performances.
6. Students are not permitted to change out of uniform on the bus. Only the jacket may be removed and hung up.
7. Only wear your uniforms at official band functions.

LOST/DAMAGED UNIFORMS

Students are assigned a uniform at the beginning of the season. They are expected to return the uniform in the same condition that they received it. Any damaged piece of uniform beyond reasonable wear will be replaced at the student's expense.

UNIFORM COMMITTEE

For assistance or additional questions please contact one of the uniform committee chairs.

PRACTICE ATTIRE/EQUIPMENT

1. Dress for the weather, both warm and cold
2. Wear socks and supportive athletic shoes (No sandals, flip-flops, boots, unsupportive shoes)
3. Use sunscreen, sunglasses, and a hat, when appropriate.
4. Bring a water bottle

NUTRITION

Marching Band is a physical activity. It is essential for their success that students are nourished and hydrated properly before rehearsals and performances. If a student does not feel well at rehearsal, it often stems from drinking or eating too much, or too little, before rehearsal. Prepare to practice and perform well.

GLOSSARY OF EVENTS

STEP UP NIGHT – The purpose of “Step Up Night” is to provide an overview of the opportunities for our students and families as they progress through the band program.

ROOKIE NIGHTS – The purpose of “Rookie Nights” are to provide an opportunity for new members to get oriented to the band program, marching fundamentals, and music fundamentals. Rookie Nights are held during the weeks prior to the start of summer band practice.

SUMMER BAND – The purpose of the Summer Band Program is to begin learning the fundamentals of marching, the musical selections, and the drills and formations used in the Pre-Game and March Show performances. This is a four-week program. The band rehearses Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 6-9 PM at the Middle School.

PRE-BAND CAMP and BAND CAMP – Pre-Band Camp and Band Camp are mandatory for all students. Pre-Band Camp is held at North Hills. Band Camp is held at YMCA Camp Kon-O-Kwee in Zelienople. The Band Camp experience not only affords students the opportunity to perfect and polish their marching routines and music, it also develops community as students learn to live and work together.

BAND FESTIVAL – The North Hills Marching Band has hosted our own band festival for over 50 years. It is a great point of pride for our community and our largest fundraiser of the year. Families are asked to volunteer for the success of the event.

STADIUM REVIEW – A concert performance of pieces from the season, and our annual CD recording.

BAND-O-RAMA – A collaborative concert featuring our hilltop bands, usually held in December.

MARCHING BAND BANQUET – An evening event to recognize our students and their successes from the season, usually held in May.

MUSIC DEPARTMENT TOUR – The culminating experience each season for our marching band, as we travel to perform and/or compete together around the country.

MEDICAL

Marching Band is a physical activity. All students must have a completed the NHSD medical information form, which is provided by the band as an online form.

Students that have any medical conditions that would restrict their ability to safely participate in the band program should complete a physical assessment and provide a doctor's release before participating.

There are several forms we should be aware of and will be using:

NHSD Medical Information Form – basic medical information, to be filled online kept on file with the band.

For overnight travel with the band:

NHSD Overnight Field Trip Form – gives permission for overnight travel and also includes some medical information.

If medication is needed while traveling over night:

North Hills School District Overnight Student Trip Medication Form

- We have nurse(s) accompany us to band camp and on tour
- Students will report to staff at the notated time, staff will provide the medication as it was submitted, students will self-administer per the prescription, medication will be immediately returned to staff. Students do not keep medication with them.
- Please assure that the form is completed in its entirety.
- **Because of the volume of students that we travel with, this is the preferred form if your student is comfortable self-administering.**

Procedure for Administering Medication at School Form

- If parents are not comfortable with their student self-administering their medication, a volunteer nurse can measure/provide the exact dose to the student.
- **Because of the volume of students that we travel with, the prior form is the preferred form if your student is comfortable self-administering.**

Both medication forms above require a doctor's signature.

DIRECTOR'S DISCRETION

Any policies not covered by this guide will be determined at the band director's discretion.

SUPPORT

Our band program is one band. We are here to support each other in any way that we can. By supporting each other we continue to create an experience for each other that second to none. Communication from our parents and students allows us to know how we can be supporting you along the way. **We are looking for a great year together!!!**

COMMUNICATION

- When registering for Marching Band, you receive **our two weekly newsletters**: “This Week in the NHIPA” and the “NHIPA Fundraising Update.” **This should be your first place to check with any questions.**
- The “**Remind**” app will also be used for immediate information and by some sections for additional communication.
- For more a **visual calendar**, or information on the organization and events held throughout the year, please visit our **website**: www.nhipa.org

MARCHING BAND STAFF

Mr. Len Lavelle	(412) 318-1402 ext. 2235	lavellel@nhsd.net
Mr. Lucas Beaver		beaverl@nhsd.net
Ms. Maura Rushlander		rushlanderm@nhsd.net
Mr. Tom Hartwell		hartwellt@nhsd.net
Mr. Evan Yester, Drumline Instructor		
Mr. Matt Hickly, Drumline Instructor		hicklym@nhsd.net
Mrs. Amanda Butler		Remind App for majorette communication
Mrs. Katie Wisniewski		wisniewskik@nhsd.net or Remind App

STUDENT/PARENT STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Students must have a completed Student/Parent Statement of Commitment on file that confirms they have read and understand our handbook. **This is completed online through the link provided in the newsletter.**

STUDENT/PARENT STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

We want our time in the marching band to be positive and meaningful. The first step in accomplishing this is working together.

As a member of the North Hills Marching Band, I understand:

- that I am expected to follow the guidelines and rules as explained in the North Hills Marching Band Student Handbook. **Please initial** _____
- the Attendance Policy on page 4 of this handbook. **Please initial** _____
- the difference between excused and unexcused absences, as described on page 4 of this handbook. **Please initial** _____

Excused Absence - During the season, a conflict with a scheduled rehearsal or event may be granted an excused absence with prior request to the director through the attendance email. Examples may include competing in WPIAL events, other school events, and once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. Sport schedules may be accommodated through collaborating with the directors and coaches. Please discuss these with the directors as soon as they arise, preferable before the season begins.

Unexcused Absence - Anything not included above can be considered an unexcused absence. Work is not considered an excused absence. Students that work should inform their employer of their obligation to the band and in most cases the employer will be happy to work around the band schedule. Other examples of unexcused absences include rock concerts, attending sporting events, homework, etc. Unexcused tardiness may be considered 1/2 an unexcused absence.

- that infractions of policies may result in suspension from participation in events or removal from group. **Please initial** _____
- that at all times during participation in the band, members represent the North Hills School District and are also subject to the rules and consequences outlined in the North Hills Middle School and High School Handbooks. **Please initial** _____

I have read and understood the policies contained within the North Marching Band Student Handbook. My electronic signature in the online form indicates my commitment, acceptance, and compliance to the policies described above.

(Parent Signature)

(Student Signature)