



# Band Handbook 2023-2024

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

## *Wester Band Students and Parents:*

*Welcome to what should be another fun and very musical year in the Wester Band. Every new year is a chance for all of us to start fresh and learn and grow. After the last couple of strange years, we are excited about how we can get back to a fully normal year of band and make this an AMAZING year for our students.*

*As we begin the year, we will work to instill a caring, supportive attitude among all band students and we will work to give the students the skills that it takes to become successful at this wonderful craft that we get to work in every day. With any craft like music, there is a certain amount of responsibility that is involved on the part of the student. The responsibility to do your absolute best in all aspects of your life at Wester and at home, the responsibility to respect yourself and others, and the responsibility to communicate effectively with your peers and your superiors (teachers and parents).*

*Students will have the opportunity to learn, share, work hard, play hard, and show off their amazing talents. The handbook covers specific details of the inner workings of the Wester Band program. For students and parents that are new to the Wester Band, you will quickly realize that the Wester Band is not just a class where a student receives a grade. As the students work and grow, the Wester Band has the potential to grow into a "home away from home." This is the way we like it. Middle School aged children need to be surrounded by kind and supportive friends and the Wester Band Directors will work to foster that in each child.*

*We ask that you read this handbook thoroughly and make yourself aware of the policies and procedures of the Wester Wildcat Band. When finished, please complete the agreement that is attached and return it by the date listed on the form*

*We look forward to working with you.*

*Brad Smith  
Director*

*Ally Lyons  
Associate Director*

# Wester Band Handbook 2023-2024

## Band Hall Expectations

Wester's Core Values are Respect, Integrity, Service, and Excellence. In the Wester Band we work hard to instill these core values through Instrumental Pedagogy and Performance. While working hard, we will see how our success can make learning fun! Students will demonstrate the "Wester Core Values" of Respect, Integrity, Service, and Excellence (RISE). The Band Hall is the Students safe space to spend time and be themselves. We must make sure we show RESPECT to our work space..

- No food or gum in the band hall - ever.
- Only current band students are allowed in the band hall.
- Practice rooms are meant for practicing only. Students must have permission to use the rooms.
- Do not touch what is not yours (other instruments, percussion equipment, teacher supplies, etc...).
- Students can enter the band office only with permission.

Students show INTEGRITY through their hard work and high character.

- Complete your assignments in the time given in all classes
- Be prepared with all supplies every day. (This includes a pencil in class daily)
- Be prepared to perform daily. (Individually and in a group)

Students will be SERVICE Oriented by giving back to the band program and their classmates.

- Be willing to assist those that need help.
- Keep the band hall and all space that you inhabit clean and neat.
- Always do what you can to make your classmates feel welcome and important.

Students will show EXCELLENCE in all that they do through being their best at everything.

- We will work hard and we will play hard.
- All students will be prepared for class everyday.
- Students will turn in all assignments on time.
- Students will communicate conflicts in advance to the band directors so that they are able to be successful in the program.
- Students will put forth 100% effort in all school activities and classes.

**Classroom Rules** - Simple version taught in class on the First day of school

1. No talking while the band director is talking
2. Look around! Everything is expensive! Don't Touch it
3. No Gum, Candy, Food, Gum, Gum, or Gum in the band hall.
4. No questions at the start of class.

## **Supplies for Rehearsals and Band Class**

Students are expected to have appropriate supplies in every band class, rehearsals, and individual practice sessions. The following supplies should be at the student's chair at all times:

Instrument, tuner, music, binder band books, a pencil (most important) – All students

Valve/slide oil – All brass players

Minimum of 3 working reeds – All reed players

## **Field trip/bus expectations**

- No gum, food, or drink on the bus.
- Remain seated on the bus.
- Talk quietly on the bus. No yelling, singing, drumming, or playing instruments allowed.
- Ride your assigned bus to and from events. (Parents may follow the buses to and from events. Only those with extenuating circumstances will be allowed to ride with a parent. These circumstances must be approved by the director and in writing before the event.) We have this rule for the safety of your children.
- In some cases cell phones will be allowed to travel with the student. Students may be asked to leave their cell phone locked up at school on performance trips. Phones can be confiscated for inappropriate use.

## **Instrument Care/Identification**

All students will be required to have their instrument cases clearly labeled with their name on a piece of tape or on an ID tag. Luggage tags work great. The instrument will be dropped off every morning and picked up every afternoon. It will be stored in the locker that is assigned to each student and must never be left overnight in the band hall.

Every student is expected to have his/her instrument in top playing condition at all times. When the students detect a problem with the instrument, he/she should take it to the director first (occasionally, the director can fix the problem). If the director cannot repair the instrument, the student is responsible for taking the instrument to get repaired. Most repairs take a few days maximum. A student should take his/her mouthpiece and reeds out of the case before taking it to the repair shop. A student can still practice on his/her mouthpiece. Students without instruments will always be at a learning disadvantage. Therefore, it is imperative that instruments in need of repair become a top priority for the students and their parents. Please consult the band website for reputable repair companies.

Please consider insurance on all instruments whether they are school owned, personally owned, or rented. Check with your homeowner's insurance policy. School owned instruments are not insured through Frisco ISD. The student/parent is responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged instruments.

## **School Owned Instruments**

School owned instruments are Oboe, Bassoon, Bass Clarinet, Tenor Sax, Bari Sax, French Horn, Euphonium, Tuba, and Percussion.

Frisco ISD charges a rental fee of \$100 for school owned instruments. This fee is due on September 1<sup>st</sup> along with the school owned instrument contract. The student/parent is responsible for any damage or repairs to the instrument. At the end of the school year, all school owned instruments are turned in for inventory check, cleaning and repair. Each student will be required to pay for the cost of repairing his/her instrument if the repairs are more than the regular wear and tear on an instrument.

## **Individual Owned Equipment**

A quality band program requires quality materials and instruments. Students are required to purchase all necessary materials for their instruments to ensure quality playing condition (i.e., correct mouthpieces, working reeds, cleaning swab, valve oil, drum sticks, mallets, etc.). Please refer to our Preferred Instrument and Supplies List when purchasing or renting an instrument. This information is on the band website. We are always trying to find a way to save money, but remember that you usually get what you pay for. If a student does not have their instrument, they will be required to complete an alternate assignment.

As a student becomes a more proficient musician, the need for a professional quality instrument is desirable. Please check with the directors and/or lesson teacher before purchasing a step-up instrument to discuss recommended brands, models, availability, and cost.

## **Instrument Storage**

Each student will be provided with an instrument storage locker. All instruments should be in the appropriate instrument locker when not in use. These lockers are for instruments and band supplies only; therefore, should not be used as a "second school locker." Do not leave your lunch, math book, or gym clothes in the band locker. Music should never be stored in the case in direct contact with the instrument as this can cause damage to the instrument.

## **Music**

All music issued to students should be kept in the band binder and maintained in good condition. If copies are needed, students can come by and ask for a copy before or after school. It is the student's responsibility to request needed music. Music checks will be held periodically during the year to see if students have the correct music and if students are marking (only in pencil) the music according to the instructions given in class. If a student needs an extra copy of music, they can print it out from the Google Team Drive assigned to their class.

## Grades

Band is a class. Band has a State Mandated Curriculum. Band is graded. Students will be assessed in the following areas

- Performance assessments in class
- Attendance to sectionals and outside performances and rehearsals
- Written work (occasional)
- Practice Records

**Practice records** will be submitted in Class every week on the 1st day of the school week. A Parent signature is required for accountability purposes.

The Practice record grading scale is on the practice record.

Practicing is not an optional “when I feel like it” activity. It is required just like homework in core classes. Practicing is vital to the success of every individual, and a consistent DAILY routine will benefit the student tremendously. Practicing is all done at home. INSTRUMENTS MUST GO HOME EVERY DAY. There is no reason for an instrument to stay at school. Locker checks will occur regularly. IF A STUDENT MISSES A WEEKS WORTH OF PRACTICE RECORDS, THEY WILL EARN CAMPUS C-HALL AND MUST COMPLETE AN ALTERNATE ASSIGNMENT.

Band grades are designed to allow students to be rewarded for their efforts and improvements. Frisco ISD has gone to a **single grade policy**. All grades will be equally weighted per District policy. The ability to make up a grade will depend on the following steps taken by the student.

1. They have consistently turned in Practice Records
2. They show on a practice record 3 days of preparation prior to retest
3. They can receive a grade up to a 90 per campus policy

## Academic Eligibility

State law requires that students pass all of their classes in order to participate in extracurricular activities. When a student fails one class for a Nine week grading period, he/she will become ineligible for at least three weeks. At the end of the three week period, if the student is passing all of his/her classes, he/she will regain his/her eligibility status. If not, the student remains ineligible for a longer period of time. The state along with the school district calendar sets the exact dates grades are checked and when eligibility begins and ends. The only exception to this is the 1st 6 weeks of school. The 6th week progress report in the First Term effects eligibility. Please contact Mr. Smith with questions.

The band program participates in two kinds of activities, extra-curricular and curricular. When a student is ineligible they may still participate in curricular activities.

Curricular activities include rehearsals, sectionals, UIL Concert and Sightreading Contest, and concerts.

Extra-curricular activities include football games, pep rallies, contests, All-Region tryouts, All-Region clinic/concert, and Solo and Ensemble Contest.

## **Outside of School Activities**

Throughout the year, students will be called upon to participate in band activities that take them off campus. Sometimes there will be activities on campus that require them to be at school early or be held late after school. Attendance to these activities is mandatory. It is important that students are on time to these activities and that they are picked up on time when after school or weekend activities conclude. The student is responsible for making sure that a ride is available to pick them up on time. If a parent is consistently late in retrieving their child, the student will face consequences which may include exclusion from future parties and fun trips (Hawaiian Falls, Sandy Lake, etc...). If a child is sick or has a conflict please email that child's teacher as early as possible.

## **Sectionals/Extra Rehearsals**

Attendance is required at all sectionals and rehearsals. Participation outside the school day is a required part of the band program and grades will be given for participation and attendance. Students in Wind Ensemble and Symphonic will have one sectional per week before or after school. Extra rehearsals will be scheduled before contests as needed. (There are usually no more than 3 extra rehearsals before a performance.) Beginning Band students will have 2 outside of school rehearsals before each performance, so we can practice with everyone together.

## **Concerts**

All students are required to attend and participate in concerts. Concerts are part of the band curriculum, and a grade will be recorded for attendance of the entire concert and appropriate concert behavior. Students are required to stay as audience members for all performing groups. It is extremely important that all students support each other's hard work and learn appropriate behavior for concerts. Excused absences from school are normally the only acceptable reasons for failure to attend a sectional, rehearsal or performance. These include illness, death in the family, etc. Students who have conflicts with performances or practices should bring a parent note to the director as soon as the conflict is known to have consideration for being excused or to leave early (minimum of one week notice). Please remember that band is a group activity and relies on everyone's participation to be successful. The earlier we know about a potential conflict the better.

## **Concert Procedures/ Etiquette**

- Be quiet and attentive during the warm-up and the concert.
- Stay for the entire concert. (This is part of the student's grade.)
- Help move equipment back to its proper place at the end of the concert. (Stands, chairs to bandhall, etc.)
- Wear appropriate uniform - this will be designated clearly prior to each event.

While in the audience:

- Remain seated during the performance. Never leave your seat while a band is performing unless it is an emergency or you are disturbing the performance (coughing, crying baby)
- Refrain from talking during the performance.
- Turn off or switch to vibrate all cell phones and beepers.
- Clap for the performers after each song is finished (in multi-movement pieces, we only clap at the end of the entire piece.) Catcalls, whistles, and yelling are not appropriate for a formal concert.

Football Game (7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade)

- The Wester Band Combines with the Lawler Band for one middle school football game performance. Information regarding this event will be provided as the event approaches.

## **All-Region Band (7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade)**

Student participation in All Region Auditions is a great way to make individual progress on his/her instrument. All-Region Band auditions involve the preparation of audition music to compete against students from other middle schools in our region. One week after the auditions are completed, the students who make the All-Region Band will participate in the All-Region Clinic and Concert. All Band Students will learn the audition music in sectionals in the fall. All Wind Ensemble Band students will audition for the All-Region Band. Symphonic and Concert Band members are encouraged to audition also but it is not required

## **Solo and Ensemble**

There are two separate Solo/Ensemble contests for our Middle School students.

1. 7th/8th grade solo/ensemble contest
  - a. District Level Event
  - b. Fee for the contest will be paid through Online School Fees later in the year.
2. 6th grade solo contest
  - a. Campus level event
  - b. Fees will be paid with the beginning of the year band registration fees.



Solo and Ensemble Festival involves students preparing a solo and/or ensemble (a small group) and performing for a judge. The judge is a professional musician who will critique the performance. The critique will include both strengths and weaknesses of the performance and suggestions on how the student can improve. The student is given a rating based on the performance. Each student will be required to perform a solo as a test grade, regardless of whether they attend the festival or not. The band director (with the help of the private teacher) will assign the solos for all students. If a student is academically ineligible, he/she will perform for a band director at the school. The band director will assist students in forming ensembles.

Solos performed for the contest must be accompanied by piano unless they are written specifically without accompaniment (percussion solos often do not require piano accompaniment). Sixth graders will not be required to perform with an accompanist. The band directors will help with finding piano accompanists. Students may use a family member or friend; however, please make sure you are aware of the person's skills. The Pianist should enhance the performance, not detract from it. The cost of an accompanist is \$20.00 for the entire activity and will be assessed at the start of the year.

## **Band Boosters and Parent Volunteers**

As a parent of a band member, you are automatically a member of the Wester Middle School Band Booster Organization. There will be many opportunities for you to assist the band program this year and we hope that you will volunteer a little time to help further the music education of your students and their classmates.

To become a volunteer, you first need to pass a criminal background check per FISD Policy. You can do this on-line by going to [www.friscoisd.org](http://www.friscoisd.org) and looking under the volunteers link on the Parents page. Once this form has been filled out and processed by FISD you will be able to volunteer with any school-wide activities. To volunteer for a band activity, please reach out to our volunteer coordinator or the Band Booster President.

## **Band Registration:**

Registration for the Wester band involves forms that help the band staff with records and organization and fees that cover the cost of several necessary components of the band program. The forms and fees will be due by August 21st..

The forms will be emailed home to each band family and the fees can be paid on the band website or in the form of cash or a check.

There will be a \$20.00 fee for any returned check.

Students and parents can also set up/update their Charms account. Instructions are at the end of this packet. Almost all Students have been set up in Charms by Mr. Smith. If you have not been set up, please contact Mr. Smith. He will need the child's name and 6 digit school I.D #.

## **Band Fees**

All students will owe fees to be a part of the band program.

6th grade:

- Instrument rental
  - rental or purchase of instrument from Music store- Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone, Trumpet, Trombone, Percussion
  - Rental of school owned instrument from Wester M.S. - Oboe, Bassoon, French Horn, Euphonium, Tuba, Percussion - will show up in online school fees account
    - \$100 for the entire school year
- Supplies for instrument - These were outlined in the spring prior to joining the band and can be purchased through an instrument supply kit
- Wester Band Booster club registration fees:
  - Band T-shirt - required uniform for performance
  - band books and binder
  - Solo contest fee
  - Festival fee

7th/8th grade

- Instrument rental
  - rental or purchase of instrument from Music store- Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone, Trumpet, Trombone, Percussion
  - Rental of school owned instrument from Wester M.S. - Oboe, Bassoon, French Horn, Euphonium, Tuba, Percussion - will show up in online school fees account
    - \$100 for the entire school year
- Supplies that were purchased during the beginning year. Some updates may be necessary.
- Wester Band Booster club registration fees:
  - Band T-shirt - required uniform for performance
  - band books and binder
  - Festival fee
- Solo Contest Fee
  - Assessed later in the year by Frisco ISD - will show up in Online School Fees account

## **Band Uniforms**

7th/8th grade Concert Attire will involve the following items:

- Black Pants and black belt
- Black Long sleeved shirt - boys must have a collar
- Black socks - calf high
- Black Shoes

## Private Lessons

Frisco ISD is extremely fortunate to have an outstanding staff of private lesson teachers. This program is designed to enrich and further the level of performance of the musician. One on one individual instruction is one of the main reasons why band programs are extremely successful in Texas. Even though private study is not a requirement for participation in the musical organization, it should be noted that most band students take advantage of this excellent opportunity. It is a misconception that private lessons are for students who have "fallen behind" on their instrument. While private lessons will benefit those students, private lessons are designed and intended for students that are advancing and proving success on their instrument. The opportunity to study with these professional musicians is invaluable and has proven to be one of the most successful ingredients to individual achievement. Private Lessons are \$23.00 a lesson / once a week. (This is an update sent to us by the District).

Private lessons may occur before/after the school day. They are once a week for 30 minutes (if before or after school). During class they are half the class period (roughly 23 minutes).

Responsibilities of the private lesson student and/or parent:

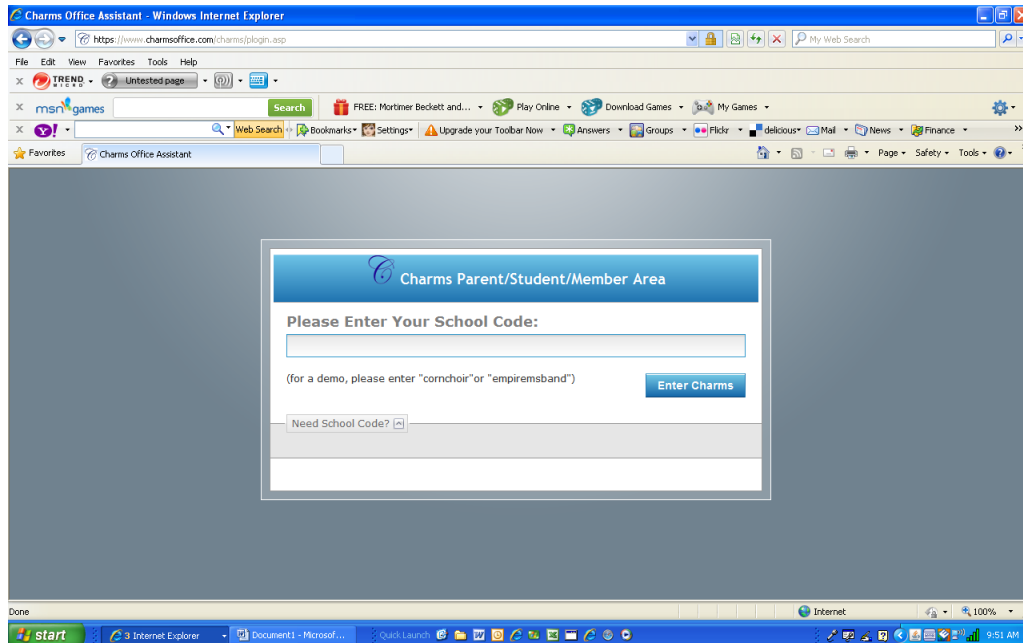
- Attend each lesson prepared with all supplies.
- Pay for the entire month on the first lesson of the month (Please pay on time. This is the only source of income for some of our teachers.)
- Commit to lessons for an entire semester.
- Notify the teacher if the child will be absent from a lesson (This includes illness, class field trips, family emergency, etc. Please call the private teacher directly. Notifying the school or band director is not sufficient for an excused absence).
- Unexcused absences must be paid for. Please inform teachers of conflicts at least one week in advance. Please contact the teacher of illness within 24 hours.

Private lesson scholarships may be made available to the students that meet certain criteria. The Scholarship is provided by the Wester M.S. Band Boosters and covers ½ of the weekly private lesson cost. Please see Ms. Lyons for scholarship information.

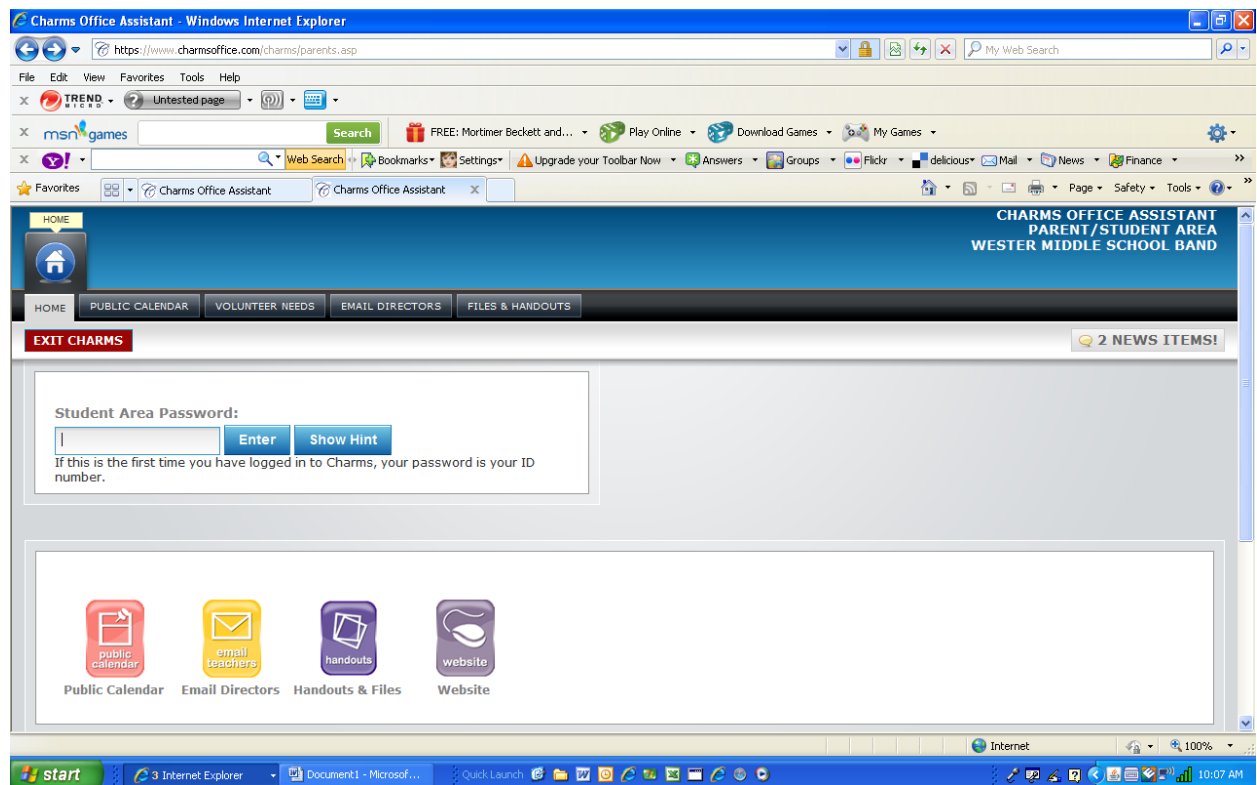
Login to [www.charmsoffice.com](https://www.charmsoffice.com)

Move your arrow over ENTER and click on the Parents/Student/Member section

Enter the school code “westerband”



Enter the student's six digit school district I.D. number. Include zero's if they are in the I.D. number.



Click on Update Info and fill out the appropriate information.

