



Welcome! NEW BAND PARENTS (and vets that need a refresher course)

Let's Get Started

This information has been put together by a group of parents who spent a large portion of their “rookie year” in various stages of confusion. In the many hours spent together watching practices and performances, waiting to pick up kids, and following yellow school busses, we asked a lot of questions. As novice band parents, of course we wanted to know what we should do. After all, the only people who were even more confused and looking to us for answers were our children. We wanted to share with you, the “upcoming rookie parents”, some of the answers to these many questions before we too

forget how it felt not knowing what was going on...(of course we still don't have all the answers)! Being a member of the Valley High School (VHS) Band Program will bring your children an interesting, and fulfilling educational experience. They will work hard and experience many triumphs, as well as downfalls; two things that will prepare them for the real world after high school. We sincerely hope this guide will answer some important questions about time management, time commitment, band fees and how to pay for them, fundraising, and uniforms. We would also like to give you some “insider” information on what it takes to be a band student, and a band parent! Here are a few key people that you should get to know. The Band Booster President is Ms. Erin De Groot; she will be your go to person for any questions about parent involvement, the Booster Club or any of the committees. The Band Director is Mr. Mark Ellington; The Band Director can answer general questions about the functioning of the band program, calendar, schedule, etc.

How Will My Child Have Time?

TIME MANAGEMENT

How will our children have the time to go to rehearsals four days a week outside school, perform at eight to twelve Friday night football games, and compete on four or five Saturdays? How will they have the time to do all of this, within a three-month period, and keep up their grades?? TIME MANAGEMENT will be the most important skill that your children will acquire when they become members of the VHS band program. The students quickly learn that they must use every minute of their day wisely. The time not spent in practice has to be spent doing schoolwork, there is no other choice and they know that. At any given time, you will find students in the band room, out in the hallway, or in any other space available, doing homework. This is taught to them when they first join the program and it is expected of them. Educational research has shown (and parents agree) that the discipline and focus developed in marching

band carries over into the classroom. Not surprisingly, many Marching Band students are Honor, AP and/or college bound and receive many academic accolades and college scholarships. Your student will learn how to keep a schedule, how to be punctual, and how to set priorities. During the first week of Band Camp, a detailed schedule will be distributed to all band students. It will list every rehearsal, football game, and competition your student will be required to attend over the next three months (well, almost every rehearsal). You can also view this schedule on the Band's web site at www.vhsband.org. This schedule should now become a permanent attachment to your refrigerator. Your child will also become punctual. They will be taught the meaning of the phrase... **"If you're early, you're on time; if you're on time, you're late"**. Finally, your child will learn how to set priorities. Band rehearsals and homework will now fill their free time. While this may seem daunting – your child *will* find time to make friends, experience what teamwork is, and (after marching camp) start school with many new friends – making band a great place to be if they are punctual and are prioritizing their busy lives.

What about Rehearsals?

DOES MY STUDENT REALLY HAVE TO BE THERE?

Rehearsals during Marching Band season are mandatory. One absent member will disrupt rehearsal for all members of the band. To be able to put the best possible musical product on the field, the director needs all members of the band to be present during all scheduled rehearsals. Please see the Band Handbook (every student will receive one) for the consequences of missed rehearsals. The student's membership depends on consistent participation. Management of a band this size is a monumental task and it becomes next to impossible if members of the band are absent. Please help your student make every effort to be there – remember PUNCTUALITY!!

How Do Parents Get Involved?

PARENT INVOLVEMENT = A SUCCESSFUL BAND PROGRAM

Getting involved in the band program will give you the opportunity to share with your child the last four years of their education, these years that go so fast and are rarely enjoyed by many parents. Your child might say they rather not have you around, but most parents actually learn that in reality they appreciate your involvement and will thank you in the future. VHS is fortunate to have a great director. The band parents are needed to support the director, and help with the details of fundraising, transporting, feeding and watering an organization this size. The band needs parents to be able to function; it is for this reason that we urge you to get involved. Join one of the many committees; we need your help. Grandparents, siblings, or any member of your family can get involved and make a difference. If you have a child in the VHS Band then CONGRATULATIONS you are now a member of the Band Boosters (There are no fees; just be involved). The Band Boosters it is a great way to meet the parents and the kids your student will be spending much of their time with for the next four years. The easiest way to volunteer is by attending the monthly Band Booster meetings where you will learn more about the program and where it needs your help. Booster Meetings are held every second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM in the VHS Band Room. There are many days where parents are arriving to pick their child up from practice and we encourage you to not just sit in the car, get out and ask, "How can I help?" It is fun and you meet the other parents with the same interests as yours. Also at the end of every rehearsal there will be full band announcements for the students and being out of the car and nearby is an incredible opportunity to gain even more information that never passes from your child to you.

How Do We Keep Informed?

The VHS Band web site is a place that you will want to visit OFTEN – not only to keep informed, but also to view the most recent pictures of the band's activities. It is here that you will find the latest information on all upcoming events and fundraising opportunities. Make sure to visit our web site at www.vhsband.org. You will find rehearsal times, schedules, Band Handbooks, Chaperone Guidelines, and all parent contact information. You will also have an opportunity to sign up for the mailing list.

How Do We Pay For This?

There are many questions about the economic impact of the Band Program. While your middle school programs traditionally did not have fees, the high school band program is very different. When we hear the bottom line, we sometimes wonder how we are going to be able to raise the funds needed for our children to be able to continue the pursuit of their musical interest. Our Director does not want the economic factor to keep any student from participating in band and will always work with the parents in developing a program or process to ensure that the fees get covered. Throughout the year there are many opportunities to earn band fees. There have been families that did not pay anything out of pocket for their student to be in band, and to participate in the yearly band trip, due to their successful fundraising. We have a fundraising team, dedicated to provide many opportunities to earn band fees. The best way to learn about these fundraising opportunities is by keeping informed; and the best way to keep informed is by visiting the Band web site and attending the Band Booster meetings that take place all year long.

When the bus arrives back at school can my child leave?

NOT until the following has happened:

- They have turned in their uniform, hung up correctly. Students will be shown the correct method to hang the uniform to help ensure proper look, fit and life expectancy of the uniform.
- Listened to any messages from the Director. There are times where information about the following day, week or event is given just before dismissal. This helps students with remembering when and where they are supposed to be.
- They have gathered all their stuff and their equipment, uniform and instrument are unloaded and put in its proper place.
- ***This entire process usually takes about 30 minutes AFTER the bus has arrived back at Valley.***

Helpful Hints to Save You Time and Grief:

- Make your child responsible for being prepared. The first time they forget something will be the last!!! They learn to be resourceful when they have to be.
- At the end of each practice session there are usually announcements – listen up. This is your best opportunity to find out who, what, where and when things are going on.
- Network – This is how we meet each other. It is also one of the best ways to get helpful hints on band parenting from others.
- Carpool to competitions when parent busses aren't available.
- Be prepared to cheer! The band loves it when they have their own cheering section.
- Don't put uniform items away in the closet or drawers when cleaned. Keep all items (socks, shoes, band shirt, gloves, etc.) in a bag. These tips will save time spent hunting for them each time they are needed.
- Keep extra gloves, socks, needle & thread, etc. in your car or purse just in case.
- Visit the band web site OFTEN and attend Booster Meetings to stay informed.
- VOLUNTEER – VOLUNTEER – VOLUNTEER!!!

You Know You Are A Band Parent When. . . .

- You make three more trips than expected to drop off your child with everything they need.
- You carry spare black gloves, needle and thread, safety pins, black socks and duct tape in your pocketbook.
- You follow buses around.
- You can't pick your child out of the crowd because they all look alike.
- You no longer speak of your child as a fourteen-year-old daughter/son, but as a "freshman trumpet, freshman flute," etc.
- You prominently display a band calendar in the kitchen, have band dates marked on the calendar in your purse and/or have the Band Hotline Number on your speed dial.
- You know that you will be wearing something Maroon and/or Gold every Friday night and on Saturdays.
- "To be early is to be on time and to be on time is to be late" becomes your mantra for everything you do.
- You don't leave home without cushions to sit on, camera and camcorder!
- You are cheering with other band parents.

We hope this information answered some of your questions – please feel free to ask any and all questions you have at the Booster Meetings, or directly to any experienced band parent – together we will find the answer(s).

To all Parents of VHS Bands,

This memo is to provide information regarding fees for their participation in the band program at VHS. These fees are APS fees that are necessary for this program to operate.

All fees detailed below must be paid with CASH or CERTIFIED CHECK or MONEY ORDER.

To: Valley HS Band

Below is a price breakdown showing the amount due for your child's participation in any combination of bands.

Fees:

There is a blanket course fee that will be added into Synergy for EACH Band your student enrolls in: Marching, Symphonic and/or Jazz, the first band will be \$75 and each additional band will be \$50 each **These fees will not be cleared until the Booster Fee of \$100 has been cleared.**

The Maximum would be \$275, \$100 for the Boosters and \$175 Course Fees; the minimum would be \$175, \$100 Booster Fee and \$75 course fee. Any overage is a considered a Booster Fee.

When payments are made, Booster fees will be prioritized, once these fees are paid in full all additional payments will be used to clear all remaining Course Fees.

Example:

Any 1 Band: Total Fee= \$175 (\$75 course Fee/ \$100 Booster Fee)

Any 2 Bands: Total Fee = \$225 (\$125 course fees/ \$100 Booster Fee)

All 3 Bands: Total Fee = \$275 (\$175 course fees/ \$100 Booster Fee)

All fees will have a scheduled set of dates for payments for everyone's convenience. However any outstanding payments will be compiled before the end of the school year and be submitted to the activities office; please don't hesitate to contact the booster board if you have any questions.

Booster fees are used to pay clinicians and guest artists to come in and work with the students and ensembles. As well as props and other necessities all the groups may need.

Note: Failure to pay fees will result in a hold being placed on your child's registration process for next semester/ year.

Our Continued Thanks,
Valley Band