

# **Freshman Parent Handbook For Band Participation at Shawnee Mission West**



**AKA**

**“Everything you ever wanted to know about band, but were afraid to ask and your child will never tell you!”**

*Developed by parents - for parents*

# What are the band activities my 9<sup>th</sup> grader and I should participate in and what do we do?

(See attached Calendar for important dates;  
check the website for updates at [www.bandaides.org](http://www.bandaides.org))

## General Information for Parents of 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

1. Join Band-Aides - it's only \$5.00 per family and the information and friendships (not to mention the food) help make the high school transition easier.
2. Attend as many concerts, fundraising events, ballgames, activities, and Band-Aides meetings as you possibly can - getting to know other parents makes such a difference in the comfort level for both you and your student and creates a sense of belonging in this very large high school environment.
3. Band-Aides sponsors two major fundraisers during the year - The Spaghetti Dinner which includes the Silent and Live Auctions in the fall and the Chili Supper in late January or February. Please support these events by helping your student sell tickets to friends and family, returning the money by the deadline, providing an auction item for the Spaghetti Dinner - from either a business you know or something that you make or a service you provide. Other ways to get involved include signing up to help set up, clean up, serving line, drinks, etc., and by attending and participating. All of the money raised at these events goes back to the students through the band program and helps defray our costs as parents.
4. There will be a series of set times given for different events. These are beginning times! Remember, to be early is to be on time. To be on time is to be late. To be late is to be in trouble! For example, if a rehearsal begins at 5:30pm, the student should report at 5:15pm.
5. Check the web site - [www.bandaides.org](http://www.bandaides.org) - frequently. It contains a wealth of information as well as really cool pictures of our events. Please, fill out your contact information on the **charms** link located on the Band-Aides website. To gain access to **charms**, use your student's ID number. Here, you will be able to update contact information (which is critical to the program), check on your student's fundraising accounts, and lettering points.
6. Purchase Band-Aides spirit wear and wear it with pride to the events.
7. If you have questions, contact any of the executive board members. They will be glad to answer your questions.  
Co-Presidents - Gerald & Loretta Hower, 648-7871, [president@bandaides.org](mailto:president@bandaides.org)  
Co-Vice Presidents - Cindy Wiscombe, 432-4063, [vpres@bandaides.org](mailto:vpres@bandaides.org)  
Secretary - Karen Green, 648-3964, [secretary@bandaides.org](mailto:secretary@bandaides.org)  
Treasurer - Jodi Nelsen, 381-7799, [treasurer@bandaides.org](mailto:treasurer@bandaides.org)

8. The Louie Louie Band is a group of West students who support our community by marching in the Lenexa 4th of July Community Days Parade in July. This is not a mandatory SM West sanctioned marching event.

9. Participate and enjoy all of the activities your child is involved in at Shawnee Mission West High School. Being involved and feeling that you belong will make your high school experience great. The four years fly by very quickly!

10. Students will be issued a locker to keep their instrument in during school. The lockers are located in the band room. The student will be checked out a lock. If it is lost a \$10 fee will be charged for replacement.

11. There will be a folder coming home at the beginning of school that will have several forms in it requiring your signature. Please read throughout the documentation and fill out the forms. Have your son or daughter help you. This information is used as the staff sends out mailings and weekly emails containing current event reminders, schedules, contact names and numbers as well as accolades of jobs well done by the students. Without travel forms and band fees being paid, your student WILL NOT be allowed to travel and perform with the band. Please return the forms and fees as soon as possible. Take note of who should receive the checks. Possibilities include SM West, Band-Aides, or Shawnee Mission School District.

12. Every student is expected to practice at home on a weekly basis. The students are busy and may not be able to practice every night, but a regular week should include an hour to hour and a half of solid practice. Band is just like math or English - they all have home work. It is just known as practice. Work on those difficult measures, fix them and then you are done. Every student has music they can take home and work on.

13. Private lessons are not just for people who are having difficulty. Private lessons are for anyone who wants to improve! Students who want to play in the SM West Wind Ensemble or OE probably need to take lessons from a highly qualified specialist on their instrument. Please ask a director for help in finding a good instructor.

14. Sometimes it is difficult to find time in the student's schedule for everything they want to take. PLEASE - look carefully every year to make sure they are on track. West has had several students graduate with honors, be in the top 10% of their class and still take band every year, and even Jazz Band. IT CAN BE DONE. Sometimes a few classes have to be taken in the summer, but honestly sometimes they are easier in the summer. Please don't let your son or daughter miss out on memories and college scholarships because they couldn't schedule band their senior year! Come see us on parent night and we can talk more about this.

**Now let's look through the year and see what each month holds for fun and excitement in the wonderful world of the West Pride Bands!**

## August

□ There is a Band-Aides meeting in August in the band room. Check the web site for day and time.

Because freshman are involved in marching pregame, there will be a few days of band camp to learn basic marching band skills. Students are asked to bring a pencil to record positions, changes and notations for music, sunscreen, and good sneakers since they will be on their feet all day! We also encourage students to bring an enthusiastic attitude, a dedicated commitment to our team, respect for instructors, and a sense of humor.

□ Be sure to attend the Picnic in the Park. If your student is in sports, just get there as quickly as you can. You bring a food or beverage item as assigned by the starting letter of your last name. Dress is very casual. Bring lawn chairs and the whole family. See the picnic flyer on the website ([www.bandaides.org](http://www.bandaides.org)).

□ Check your freshman band packet or website for documentation needed to earn a school letter jacket numeral.

## September

□ Check the web site for the September Band-Aides meeting.

□ Attend and enjoy the pre-game and halftime shows at the football games. Look for the Band-Aides West banner; introduce yourself to the other parents, and enjoy the show. You won't want to miss the October 19<sup>th</sup> football game ...it ends with the West Pride flashlight show!

□ For **Home** football games (we do not do pregame for away games), students will meet at the SMW 5:30pm. Students will be fed supper for some of these dates (they will know ahead of time). Also, parents are asked to drop off/pick up students by the band room at SMW. Buses will be provided to transport students to and from the games. During home games, the band sits as a single unit to cheer on the team. They will be dismissed third quarter to eat, chat, etc. During 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, students will be given instructions by the band staff **if** the jacket can be removed from the uniform.

## October

□ Band-Aides meeting in October in the band room. Check the web site for other information.

□ Spaghetti Dinner with the Silent and/or Live Auction is one of our BIGGEST fundraisers of the year. You will need to provide either 1 cake or 2 pies that you will take to West in the afternoon. Your student and you can sign up to help with set up, serving, clean up, activities, etc. Your student can earn points toward their letter jacket numerals (see the letter requirements on the website) for helping at these events. Make sure your student sells the tickets they receive for the event and returns the unsold tickets and money by the due date. It is very important for the tickets and money to be returned at the stated time.

□ There will be two parades this month that the entire band will participate in; the Homecoming Parade which takes place during school hours and the Overland Park Parade which will be on a Saturday. Transportation for these events will be provided.

- Students are eligible to audition for District Honor Band in December. Preparation for this audition should begin at this time. Ask the band directors for more details.

## November

- Band-Aides meeting in November - check the web site.
- Fundraiser - The band program generally has a fundraiser in November. Your student can earn points toward their letter jacket numerals (see the letter requirements on the website) for helping distribute the items purchased.
- Pep band rehearsals start this month for basketball pep band. All 9th graders are welcome to participate in pep band, and it is another way for students to earn points toward their letter jacket numerals. Students will be assigned to either the gold or black pep band and will play half the games. Basketball pep band practices are at 7:00 a.m. in the morning, usually 2 mornings a week for 3 weeks and students need to be at each practice in order to participate. Students get a West band shirt to wear to pep band games.

Auditions for District Honor Band are held this month.

## December

- Keep eyes open for a possible Band-Aides meeting in December.
- The Winter Concert is in the auditorium, featuring Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, Freshman Band, Overland Express, and Jazz Lab. Students should refer to the “Uniform” section of the band handbook, which is on the website, for concert dress guidelines. This is a wonderful concert - a great opportunity for all parents to hear the awesome music of the Shawnee Mission West Band Program! Our students’ work so hard preparing for these performances and they really do appreciate having their families cheering for them.
- District Honor Band will be held the first Saturday in December for those selected. This is an all day event with rehearsals in the morning and a combined concert later in the day.

## January

- Band-Aides meeting this month. Check the website for the date.
- January has several pep band performances. Come to the basketball games and hear the pep band rock the house!
- The West Area Band Festival- West Area is for 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, Wind Ensemble, and Overland Express only. Even though 9th graders do not play at West Area, set-up is that morning, and your student can again earn lettering points for helping with set up.
- Now is the time to prepare for solo and ensemble contest. Literature should be chosen now and those taking private lessons should be working with his/her teacher. The festival will be held in early April. If an accompanist is needed, the student/parent is responsible for acquiring one. If there are any troubles finding an accompanist, the Band Staff will provide a list of names and numbers.

## February

- Band-Aides meeting in February in the band room. Check the web site.
- The KSHAA Regional Solo Piano Festival is usually held the first part of February at Baker University in Baldwin City, Ks. Students perform before a judge for a rating. A “1” rating entitles the student to perform at the State Piano Festival at Wichita State University, usually two weeks later. Music must be memorized to be eligible for a “1” rating and all performers must present an original copy of the music for the judge. Freshmen can participate in this activity.
- Chili Supper is a small-scale fundraiser. Sign up to help serve, etc. Your student will earn points for helping. Make sure your student sells the tickets they receive for the event and return the unsold tickets and money by the due date. It is very important for the tickets and money to be returned at the stated time. In addition to all bands performing at this event, the parents can participate in the “world renowned” Thundering Herd Band. Information for this event will be available as the event nears.

## March

- There is a Band-Aides meeting in March. Check the web site for time and date.
- The Freshman Band often attends an out-of-district festival in the spring. The Directors will provide information on this as soon as it is available.
- Often in March, our basketball team has made it to the state tournament in Emporia, and the pep band has gone to play. It’s a fun time and we might get to ride on great busses!
- There will be a solo and ensemble recital night required for everyone participating in the solo and ensemble festival. At this recital, students will play for a panel that will provide feedback to better prepare students for the upcoming festival

## April

- Band-Aides meeting in April in the band room. Check the web site.
- This month has District Solo, Small Ensemble, and Large Ensemble competition. 9th graders can sign up to do a solo performance or put together an ensemble such as trio, quartet or quintet to prepare a piece for judging. As with all music competitions, only original music may be used for a performance and the judge must also have an original copy of the music. If the ensemble or solo gets a “1” rating at Regional’s, they perform at the State competition at Emporia State University. Also, if your student plays a solo, they must have two original copies of their music - one for them and one for the judge. Both Wind Ensemble and Symphonic Band play for ratings at the Large Ensemble Festival, but 9th grade band does not.
- Jazz on the Bridge is at SMW on the bridge. Good food, great jazz from Jazz Lab and Overland Express, as well as other jazz bands and the infamous Alumni OE band, make this a great evening.

## May

- Take a deep breath - the year is quickly coming to an end! The last Band-Aides meeting of the year is in May. Check the web site for this information.
- Your child's final concert is the Spring Concert. This concert is for all groups. Dress for this concert is a little more relaxed for the students.
- The 2nd big event this month is the Band Banquet. This is our evening to celebrate the students' many accomplishments during the year and to recognize our senior class. You purchase tickets for this event for your family only - this is NOT a fundraiser. The banquet has a catered meal and a great evening of recognition, culminating in the slide show - a pictorial documentation of the year. What a beautiful evening this is. Dress is more "church clothes" for everyone.
- The last event of the year is graduation. The 10th and 11th grade band students play at graduation. This is a required performance.

**You are joining a wonderful family that has a lot of fun together through enjoying activities with our kids. We get to go places and see amazing sights due to the band activities. Be a part of something wonderful with your son or daughter - You will not regret it - we promise!**

## Remaining Questions

### **What do we need to purchase?**

Black shoes and Black gloves – Band-Aides will take orders at band camp  
Black socks

### **What do band fees pay for?**

Uniform cleaning, meals at events, transportation, and any other costs associated with the band program. All money goes back to the students in one form or another.

### **What is Band Camp?**

Band Camp is held several days in early August. Its purpose is to teach marching skills to the students and to learn the field show. It is also a time for members to get to know each other and become a team.

### **Where is Band Camp held?**

Band Camp is held at the high school. Some of the day may be spent in the building. The marching component will be on the marching field in the back of the school.

### **What is a Drum Major?**

The band has three Drum Majors, chosen for their leadership ability and musical skill. They direct the band during performances, offering tempo and leadership.

### **What is a Section Leader?**

The band has a Section Leader for each musical section of the band (flutes, percussion, etc.). They are also chosen for their leadership ability and musical skill. They help their sections prepare for the field show and lead mini-group rehearsals called sectionals. Your child should hear from the section leader prior to band camp.

### **What do Band-Aides do?**

Volunteer to help with games, etc., organize fundraisers to offset costs, provide for assistant staff, pay for items not covered by the school budget, provide for scholarships each year, construct props for the field shows (design, expense, assembly), provide transportation for pit equipment.

### **How can I help?**

Join the Band-Aides, fill out the membership form, come to our monthly meetings, support your musician, and introduce yourself. (We'd love to get to know you and will be spending many hours together.)

## **Other Tips**

### **Inclement Weather Tips**

Our season runs from hot weather to frigid weather with plenty of rain in between.

**BE PREPARED!**

Sock and glove liners are helpful. Purchasing small heat packs to keep on your person is a good idea.

Get rain gear for yourself and your musician.

### **Budgeting Time**

Rehearsals are held MTWF during seventh block (which is within regular school hours). Occasionally, students will be asked to join in on morning rehearsals which begin at 7:00am.

Band kids tend to perform well academically during the season because they are forced to budget their time carefully and use every spare minute for studying.