



2025 Mars High School Marching Band

Perseverance•Teamwork•Unity

Dear Students and Parents,

I would first and foremost like to welcome you all to the 2025 Mars High School Marching Band. Throughout this 2025 season, members of this ensemble will have the opportunity to continue the historic success of the marching program at Mars High School. We are so glad to have you on board for this journey!

As a school program, the marching band prides itself on developing a positive educational environment for all of its performers. Instructed by some of the most talented and experienced staff and instructors in the area, members will receive positively life changing experiences, not only as performers, but as young adults.

Throughout the season, students will participate in a variety of performances such as football games, competitions, parades, as well as other community events. Participating in these events help to not only promote camaraderie amongst themselves, but to be active in the community as well. Being in this program also helps to build friendships that can last a lifetime.

Within this handbook, you will find information regarding the various aspects of the Mars High School Marching Band. The handbook will be broken down into sections, with each section serving its own purpose. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

We are looking forward to another fantastic marching season!

Director
Mars High School Marching Band
marchingdirector@marsband.com

Student/Parent Handbook

Philosophy

The Mars High School Marching Band is an organization that is dedicated to providing students with not only skills in the performing arts, but life skills as well. All interactions are geared towards excellence socially and artistically. As an ensemble, our goal is to understand that we are all a part of something greater than ourselves, and that excellence isn't possible without complete commitment of everyone involved.

Becoming A Member

Any student with a positive attitude and a willingness to learn has a spot within the Mars High School Marching Band. Positive outlooks towards rehearsals and performances as well as an eagerness to do what is required to be successful are all characteristics needed to be part of the marching program. Overall, the ideal band member is someone who is willing to give their best for the good of the organization.

Leadership

Leadership for the 2025 marching band season will be selected by the director and staff of the marching band prior to the end of the 2024-2025 school year. In order to be considered for one of the leadership positions, students will be evaluated on the basis of musical/marching ability, cooperation, interpersonal skills, and overall leadership qualities. Members must be in good standing (no outstanding financial matters – student accounts up to date) and have no outstanding performance or behavioral issues. Any leadership member who fails to uphold their responsibilities will be removed from their position at the discretion of the director.

Season Schedule

The yearly schedule is handed out to the students prior to the beginning of the season. Listed on the schedule are all regular rehearsal dates, times, band camp dates, and performance dates (both football games and competitions). Please refer to this schedule when scheduling appointments to avoid any conflicts. Attendance expectations will be discussed in a later section. The schedule will also be posted on the band's web site at www.marsband.org.

Band Camp:

Band Camp is a mandatory requirement for all students wishing to participate in the marching band. Full attendance is required for all 10 days. Students are expected to make every effort to keep their schedule clear for those two weeks. Much of what the students will do throughout the rest of the season will be dictated by those two weeks. If the student is not able to fully attend band camp, they will kindly be asked not to participate.

Students are expected to dress within the school dress code Athletic apparel should be worn at every rehearsal. Athletic shoes/sneakers are a must for all students in rehearsal.

Rehearsal Expectations

At rehearsals, students are expected to give their maximum effort at all times. In order to begin rehearsals on time, students are expected to arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of rehearsal. Students will then have about 15 minutes of pack-up time at the conclusion of rehearsal.

Students are expected to dress within the school dress code Athletic apparel should be worn at every rehearsal. Athletic shoes/sneakers are a must for all students in rehearsal.

Attendance

Each member is expected to attend all rehearsals and performances. Maximum attendance is absolutely essential to the success of the marching band. Our pursuit of excellence in performance can only be realized given maximum attendance that permits effective use of rehearsal time. We schedule the minimum number of practices needed to sustain the quality and educational validity of our style and scope of band program. No practice is *extra* or *unnneeded*.

An unexcused absence for a rehearsal or performance cannot be tolerated and consequences for missing will be determined by the Director.

Excused absences: Bed-ridden illness, Death in the Family, Wedding.

Unexcused absences: Work, Spectator at music concerts or sporting events, Routine medical or dental appointments, Non-emergency medical specialist appointments, Homework/studying, Senior or other picture appointments, Routine club/group activity meeting or events, Events such as family outings, birthday celebrations (student or family) or college fairs.

***** Unexcused absences (please see the definition) will result in consequences. The directors will expect a time of service to the band program in the amount of unexcused time missed. Students will be expected to practice at rehearsals but will not perform until this time is made up. Performance opportunities may also be withheld.**

Summer Vacation

All marching band members are asked to submit an email marchingdirector@marsband.com at least two weeks in advance for a vacation during the summer as a courtesy to help our record keeping and rehearsal planning. You can also submit absence forms ONLINE on our website if you would like. . Summer vacations should not be scheduled during band camp dates. Students missing any significant time of band camp will not be permitted to be a member of the marching band.

Equipment Care

School owned equipment becomes the responsibility of the student to whom the equipment is assigned. School equipment given to students will be logged at the beginning of the season. Any damage other than normal wear-and-tear will need to be repaired at the student's expense. This includes lost or misplaced equipment due to leaving it unattended at any time. You will be billed for replacement costs of any item issued to you that is lost or stolen due to your negligence.

Uniform Care

All wind and percussion members will be issued a full uniform for the season. You are responsible for keeping all of these items in excellent condition. All colorguard members will be issued a Football uniform and a competition uniform. Please notify the staff/boosters as soon as possible if you have any problems with your uniform.

Band Uniform parts include: Shako (hat) and box, plume, uniform jacket, sequin sash, cape, gauntlets, Pants (bibs), and garment bag

Additional items (not provided by the school): Shoes, black socks (covers the ankle), undergarments, and gloves. Consider purchasing more than one pair of gloves so as to always have a clean pair available.

Uniform Guidelines:

1. When in uniform, students must always have bibs up over the shoulders and black long socks and appropriate shoes on.
2. When in full competitive dress, small metallic earrings and light make-up will be permitted.

*** If someone is wearing something that may damage the uniform, or disturb the uniformity of the band*

they will be asked to remove makeup or jewelry at the discretion of the staff.

3. Wear uniform bibs on the bus unless otherwise instructed by Director and/or chaperones.
4. Students are to wear the shirt instructed by the director under their bib. No other shirts will be acceptable
5. Do not wear long pants under the uniform, however long black thermals or Under Armor are permitted.
6. All parts of uniform must be kept clean including shoes and gloves.
7. All garment bags and hat boxes must have name tags.
8. Do not alter, cut or otherwise tamper with a band uniform. Contact a uniform parent if an adjustment needs made
9. Do not place shoes, socks, gloves shako or shako box in garment bag.
10. Hang uniform in garment bag for travel and storage.
11. Do not store any part of the uniform in the garment bag.
12. Do not put uniform in clothes dryer.
13. Remove stains immediately with cold water before they have a chance to set.
14. When wearing the uniform, you represent the band. All actions when in any part of the uniform must be in the best interest of our organization.

Travel

All school district and marching band rules are in effect for the duration of a trip. The Directors reserve the right to dismiss or send home any student who disobeys such policies. We are representing the Mars Area Music Department and Mars Area School District whenever and wherever we perform; we will all do our best to maintain these standards to the highest degree.

If needed, students may ride home with their parent/s, a letter must be written, signed and dated by the parent, and must be presented to a designated chaperone on their particular bus. After the event a parent/guardian must pick up the student at the bus after checking in with one of the bus chaperones for that particular bus. Parents must be prompt if they are picking a student up after an event to allow the majority of students to arrive back at the school as soon as possible. Students are not permitted to be picked up by significant others or friends.

Competitions/Football Games

Competitions and other adjudicated activities as well as football games are important features of the Mars Area High School Marching Band program. It is through these activities that we obtain valuable feedback about our progress as individuals and as a program as well as develop positive relationships within our community.

Please do not video performances to share on any media platform. Doing so may infringe copyright restrictions.

The Mars Area High School Marching Band competes locally and regionally. Locally the band performs in the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Marching Band Association (PIMBA) circuit. The band also competes in the Bands of America (BOA) regional/national organization.

Behavioral Expectations

As an education based organization we will continue to implement a zero tolerance policy for behaviors that conflict with our code of conduct and image. The following behaviors will not be tolerated. Any actions deemed unacceptable will result in suspension or expulsion from the Mars High School Marching Band!

Drinking/Alcohol

Smoking

Illegal Drugs

Falsifying Information

Slander/Insulting Members

Insulting Staff/Insubordination

Disregard of Band Guidebook

Inappropriate Dress (School Dress Code)

Fighting/ Threats

Any behavior resulting suspension or expulsion from school

Any behavior resulting in punishment by law

Inappropriate behavior through social media which directly affects another member in the ensemble

Parent & Student Social Media - *When you are associated with this program your actions represent yourself as well as the entire Band, Mars Area High School, and the Mars Area Community. Any content you post specifically referencing the Mars Band (pictures, audio files, and text) should be appropriate. Do not post on behalf of the band on any forums or social media networks.*

*****If you feel that there is behavior that does not reflect what the organization stands for you are responsible to report it directly to the instructors/guidance department within 48 hours so that it may be dealt with in a relevant and timely manner.**

*****Consequences will be determined on a case by case basis by the Principals/Guidance/Directors.**

Daily Rehearsal Items

Below is a list of items students should have with them at every rehearsal, performance, etc.:

1. Athletic clothing(t-shirts, gym shorts, tennis shoes with socks, hat, sunglasses)
2. Individual water bottles(water or athletic drinks only! No soda, energy drinks, etc.)
3. Sunscreen
4. Hearing protection(especially for students in the battery. Reusable ear plugs cost roughly \$10-\$15)

5. All warmups, music, stand tunes in a binder WITH sheet protectors
6. All drill sheets for pre-game, halftime, and the show itself.
7. Pencils and chalk

Financial Obligations

The Mars Area School District provides basic support for the Marching Band program. The majority of the responsibility for meeting the financial needs of our program rests on the shoulders of the band members, parents, and boosters. Fundraising events are scheduled throughout the year to help each student offset these costs. No one will be denied participation because of financial hardship. However, everyone must do their part to help reach the financial goals each year.

Individual accounts will be established for each student. There are more than adequate fundraising activities to allow each family the opportunity to raise necessary funds. Money raised through fundraising efforts may be used to pay for the student's marching band fees, trips, and any other items required for participation in an instrumental group. All remaining money left in each student's account at the end of the school year will automatically roll over into the next school year. If a student graduates or quits the program, all account funds can be transferred to a returning member of the Marching Band or will become part of the marching band's General Fund. It should be noted, any student wanting to audition for Winterguard or Percussion Group (the competitive winter ensembles) after the completion of the marching band season, must have their marching band dues fully paid. If any amount is still owed, permission to participate in the winter activity will be at the discretion of the Director(s).

2025 Fees

Total fees for the 2025 Marching Band season will be determined based on the number of participants within the ensemble. Once numbers are set, the cost of the season will be split evenly amongst the number of students.

****Band Booster fees help provide the necessary tools needed to run a successful program. Areas such as additional staff, music/drill, equipment, props, as well as other items are financially dependent on these fees.****

Students will be required to pay a \$100 activity fee through the district. This is a separate fee that is not associated with the band boosters.

As per Mars Area School District policy, a **\$100 activity fee** will be charged to participate in the marching band. The activity fee must be paid by the first day of band camp, **July 28th, 2025**. Students cannot participate in their activity until this fee is paid. Checks are payable to **"Mars Area School District"**. Checks must be turned into the main office at the high school. If paying by check, please request a receipt for your records. The district also offers an on-line option for activity payments through:

www.familyid.com/organizations/mars-area-school-district-athletics

Additional Items to be purchased:

Marching Shoes: Estimated \$46 (For all new marching members. Current members will only need to purchase shoes if their current shoes are not in performing condition.)

Guard Shoes: Estimated \$44(For all new guard members. Current members will only need to purchase shoes if their current shoes are not in performing condition.)

Guard Warmup Suit: TBD