

Welcome to the Mount Carmel Band! You may have made one of the best decisions of your life. The unknown may be scary over the summer, but this guide hopefully will help you to understand every aspect of band. Here is your guide to your first year!

Summer:

Over the summer, your first taste of high school band should be your mentor or section leader contacting you. This is imperative, seeing as they will guide you through the summer, telling you all about band, what to do, and how to practice throughout the summer. If you are not in town during summer, make sure that you are proactive and that you are staying in touch with your section leaders and mentors- this will allow you to be kept in the loop with what is happening with all of the other band students and members in your section. However, if no one has contacted you by the end of June, contact one of the band directors.

Nearing the beginning of band camp, your section should get together at least once in order for you to get to know your new “family”. Here you may go over the music in order to grasp how it may sound as a section or you may just hang out together and get to know everyone else. Not only will there be section get togethers, but the leadership of Mount Carmel hosts a get together for all of the new upcoming band students during the summer, allowing you to get to know some of the people you should look up to, as well as being able to get to know the other incoming band members of the program. After all, you will all be learning the same new things together come August.

Band Camp:

Band camp is an all day event and is divided into 3 parts. The first part is the morning, where your section will rehearse indoors with a teacher specific to your instruments. Next, we all come together to the field, where we learn marching basics. Because the incoming students don't have any prior knowledge to marching, the first day of band camp is for the leadership and incoming students. On this day, you will learn the marching basics and you should get a head start to learning everything that you need to know for the rest of the year. In the middle of the marching block, there is a lunch break. Lunch is provided on the days that every student is there. After finishing lunch, we then go back down to the field to finish up marching. Finally, everyone goes back down to the school cafeteria, where we all rehearse the field show music for the upcoming season.

Band Camp unfortunately happens during some of the hottest days of the year. Not only is it hot in general, but once you go up to the field, the temperature is way higher. In order to prepare for this, make sure to wear clothing appropriate for the weather as well as comfortable for the hard work that band camp will be. Sunscreen, hats, and sunglasses are often forgotten about, although you won't be able to forget it when you can feel the sunburn for the rest of the week. Apply sunscreen frequently to avoid burning, as well as finding a large hat that will protect your face and neck. Although you may feel silly wearing a safari hat, you won't be the only one. No one will judge you for it, and some people may even be jealous that your face is kept out of the sun. Also, water is very important! Staying hydrated will help make band camp fly by way faster as well as making it way easier to handle. Some stores sell water bottles that are able to hold gallons of water, which might come in handy if you are going through a lot of water. Although there are water fountains up at the school, it is not ideal to have to spend your entire five minute water breaks waiting in the very long line in the sun to allow you a drink of water. Even if you don't bring your own water and don't want to wait in line, another option for you could be to find a section leader who has brought water specifically for this purpose. Some members in leadership often bring ice water in larger quantities, bringing gallons of water to share with the people who don't have it. This shouldn't be your first option though, because sooner or later, the person you rely on for water may not have any water left to share. Not only are water and clothes important, but maintaining energy is as well. Having good snacks with you will also help you to keep up your energy and to be at your optimal performance level.

All in all, band camp will be difficult. It is much more demanding than you may think, but it will prepare you and train you for the rest of marching season. This may be your first time experiencing long hours of work without much rest, but you will soon become used to it, and you will be able to see the difference of your hard work at every tournament, football game, and performance that we have. If you are struggling at all during this time, don't be afraid to ask for help. Your section leaders, mentors, or even a drum major will be willing to help you-it's their job. Everyone in this program is willing to help you succeed and wants you to succeed, because we are all a family. Band camp builds us, makes us a family, and when you enter your first day of high school, you will have over 150 friendly faces that you are able to call your friends and family.

Practice

Once a week, your section will get together to hold a sectional. These generally happen on the same day every week, so ask your section leader over the summer to make sure that you are able to attend. If you are unable to make it to a sectional, make sure to contact a section leader to let them know that you will be missing. However, sectionals are very important, and it

is important to try and attend every sectional that you can go to. For your weekly practice logs, sectionals can be counted as your practice time as long as it is signed off by a section leader. You can also take private lessons and have the private lesson teacher sign off that you did practice with them to get another easy session of practice in. However, it is up to you to practice the rest of the week. You should practice more than you think you should, because practice is actually helpful to your playing. Even though it may seem like you've played the field show a million times already, there is always room for improvement.

Rehearsals

Every Wednesday night from 6:00 until 9:15, there will be a rehearsal. Each rehearsal has a theme, and it is part of the band experience to dress up with the theme for that night. Winners will be chosen based on the best individual costume as well as the best overall section. These are really fun to participate in, although it is not required. Even though it might be fun to talk to your friends during these fun moments, once the clock hits 6:00, it is time to work. Make sure to keep the talking to a minimum by only talking to section leaders, mentors, or field techs if you have a question. Keeping quiet will help the rehearsal go by faster because we will be getting more work done. It is also important to remember to "run it back" when Mr. Mac tells us to reset our positions. More run throughs will help us to perfect our performance, making it easier to perform a good show when we eventually perform during competitions. Rehearsals will be similar to band camp in the way that you will be on your feet for the majority of the three hour rehearsal. Water breaks will be few, so take advantage of them when you get it. Make sure to keep yourself healthy by eating a good meal before hand, like going to section dinners or eating a hearty meal at home. Also remember that it is a part of your grade to wear some form of a red shirt for each rehearsal, as well as bringing your dot book and music.

Section dinners happen every Wednesday night rehearsal. These help your section to bond as well as having a good dinner before our long rehearsals. Before the rehearsal, your section will discuss where the dinner will be, and if needed, a ride will generally be arranged for you.

Passing off:

Pass offs are a major part of your grade during the first trimester. Because we are marching on the field or the street, we will not have our music with us. Thanks to this, we have to memorize all of our music. To make this memorization easier, you should work on getting to know the music during the summer. Mentors and section leaders will help you to learn your pass offs if you ask for help, and it will be way easier if you do. Make sure that you don't wait until the due date for the pass off you are working on, because if you still need to work on it, your grade will be affected. This can be prevented by being proactive, not procrastinating, and by trying to pass off earlier in the week.

Balancing Act

Starting high school or switching schools can be a lot on its own. Adding band on top of everything may seem like walking on stilts as you try to walk a tightrope. However, after you get through the first couple of weeks, things start going easier. Remember that high school is going to be a balancing act. Band will help you find new people to become friends with because of the intense amount of time you will spend with everyone. Not only will you meet a large group of freshman before school even starts, but you will meet someone from every class as well as becoming great friends with the majority of the people in band. Talk to as many people as you can during band camp or the first few days or weeks of school in order to meet as many people as possible. Don't always go to the same people for help so that you can gain a new perspective or even find a better way to learn the technique that you are struggling with. Don't be afraid to meet new people, because everyone in band is super friendly and they will be willing to help you or to even become close friends with them. Band builds a close knit family that is really hard to break down as soon as the bonds are formed during band camp. Because of this, remember that you don't have to change yourself to impress other people. Everyone will like you for who you are to begin with.

Band will take up a large chunk of time. Out of the five periods you have during the school day, band will take up two of them during the first trimester, as well as at least one after school rehearsal per week, football games, parades, and tournaments. Make sure that you remember to keep studying, doing your homework, and allocating appropriate time to your other three classes so that you don't fall behind and gain unnecessary stress. Don't slack off because you *will* end up digging yourself a hole that may seem impossible to get out of. However, even if you do end up slipping under, remember that you will survive school. All in all, as long as you stay on top of things, there is no need to worry or get nervous. Anyone will be willing to help you balance everything, especially your section leaders or other people in your section. Lastly, remember to take good care of yourself. Eat healthy foods, drink lots of water, and get as much sleep as you can.

Uniforms

One of the important aspects of band is your uniform. Respect towards the uniform and band moms are part of your grade. As long as you give your respect to the band and uniform moms, they will give respect back to you. Take care of your uniform by following the rules that the band directors and uniform moms set for you. As long as no special circumstances apply, it is generally a rule that you cannot eat anything when in uniform as well as not drinking anything

that is not water. Also, make sure that when you are in uniform, you ask permission to go to the bathroom.

Every time you are getting into full uniform, you should bring the following to maintain the best comfort: A black V-neck cotton shirt, compression shorts or leggings, shorts or pants to go over the compression shorts or leggings, black socks that are calf length or higher, as well as the shoes that are provided through the uniform moms. The new shoes that are being offered are going to be leather, which means that you are allowed to use black shoe polish to keep them shiny and in perfect shape for a performance.

There are also certain rules pertaining to the uniform that are imperative to follow. When coming to a band event where you will be putting on a uniform, you should have long hair up into a high enough bun for your shako at all times, without any product in it. If your hair isn't long enough to go into a bun, it should be off the neck. Bobby pins, hair nets, wig caps, etc. can be used. To keep consistency, there should be no makeup, nail polish, or jewelry when in uniform. If you have piercings that cannot be taken out, skin toned band aids should be placed over them as to cover up the piercing. The last few rules are also very important. Mount Carmel will be in the spotlight when at tournaments or football games. This means that there should be a certain modesty involved with your uniform. Shorts should always be over your compression shorts until you are putting on your uniform, even if you are wearing leggings as your compression shorts. If you want to change shirts, make sure to have someone cover you or go to a bathroom so that modesty is maintained, unless you are wearing a sports bra.

Football Games

Football games are the "dress rehearsal" for tournaments. Since we are in uniform, all uniform rules apply. Not only do uniform rules apply, but other rules that should be followed in order to have a better time and to maintain safety. No phones are allowed in the stadium because we are working and do not need to be distracted. Make sure that you stay close to your instrument if you want to talk to your other friends in band. You have to be ready at all times for Mr. McPherson or Mrs. Casey to conduct us. The music we play in the stands is going to be more familiar, making the songs seem easier. However, it is still important to practice the pep tunes on your own in order to stay on top of things. At halftime, we will all march down to the field and play the field show. This is our dress rehearsal. When we come back into the stands, we will continue to play pep tunes. If your friends and family are at the football games, remember that you are working. Keep talking to a minimum to those outside of band by giving a brief hello and goodbye to the outsiders. If family wasn't there to watch you perform, make sure that you are picked up at a timely manner. Football games generally end at the same time. If you know that you may be picked up late, try to arrange a different ride ahead of time as to get home at a timely manner.

Parade:

Parade is another aspect of band. During parade, we will play the march for the year or the fight song. There are few parades where everyone is playing, and these generally happen during the beginning of the year. Remember to stay hydrated, wear sunscreen, and take care of yourself before the day of the parade even occurs.

Nearing the middle of the first trimester, parade auditions will start. It is a part of your grade for band members to audition, meaning that you should work on marching the parade lines and practicing your march ahead of time. However, it is also important to remember that not everyone gets into the parade block. In some sections, it is merely a matter of numbers whether or not you get in. Remember to try your best, and after your audition, you can ask Mr. McPherson about things you did well or things you need to improve on. Your section leaders or mentors will be more than happy to prepare you for your audition, and they can also give you advice on better ways to perform for parade.

Tournaments

Tournaments typically happen on Saturday nights, except for Arcadia. Remember to bring everything that you need for your uniform, or any snacks and drinks that you want to eat or drink before and after you are in uniform. Another option for snacks are secret pals. Secret pals are picked before tournaments start, and are fun ways to get snacks and drinks. Another gift you get for each tournament are section gifts. These are gifts your section leaders put together and will give out to every person in the section.

Remember that you are representing Mount Carmel's band program, so you should behave like it. Keep the uniform rules in mind, and be respectful towards other schools. When performing, put it all on the field and keep your calm. To prepare for the performance, go through all of your dots and music when we are warming up or waiting. After you perform, you'll immediately feel and see the hard work you've put into band.

Mount Carmel has had many undefeated seasons. Coming into such a program may feel like you have a shield. However, you need to remember that you are not last year's band and that you can be better or worse. It all depends on how much work everyone puts in for the program. However, if the season turns out like previous seasons, don't take advantage of winning. Mount Carmel may have an amazing band program, but we are not untouchable. We will have to continue working hard no matter what you may think about your competition. In previous years, Mount Carmel has won and lost based on a tenth of a point. Remember that when awards are being announced, you should applaud every band announced, and stand up for any PUSD school who is announced. Also remember that sweepstakes are actually the first place award, so don't

worry if Mount Carmel isn't announced until very last. Lastly, you should remember to contact your ride home after you are done performing so that you can be picked up on time.

Arcadia

Arcadia is the final tournament of the year. It lasts all day, starting early in the morning with a long bus ride up to Arcadia. Then, everyone gets prepared to do the parade. Even if you are not in parade, it is required for you to walk the parade route to show support for your fellow marching band members. Everyone then goes to the award ceremony, seeing how Mount Carmel placed at the last parade for the entire season.

After everyone gets back on the buses, we head to the mall, where we will do the senior line. Here, you show thanks to all of the seniors for the season, and wish them luck in their next years. We then eat at the mall, and then return to the buses so that we can prepare for our last performance as a group. Remember to put everything on the field, and to be grateful for all of marching season. No matter what the judges say, know that you did the very best that you could, and that Mount Carmel has won something way better than anything that an award or judge can give us.

Concert Season

After marching season, concert season begins. During this time, you may miss marching season, but concert season is still loads of fun. We perform many concerts at the school, as well as performing in some festivals. Keep in mind that once January rolls around, scales will be passed off to Mr. McPherson or to Mrs. Casey. You will have to do the scale, velocity, intervals, arpeggios, and broken thirds in order to pass off each scale, so remember to practice these scales ahead of time so that you don't fall behind. Also remember to memorize or work on your fight song, because this will be the final for the third trimester.

During the concert season, different bands are available. Jazz band, pep band, and orchestra are available to sign up for year round, but all of these extracurriculars start to amp up during the concert season. These bands are incredibly fun to join if you have the time, and it is highly recommended that you consider joining one of these extracurriculars.

Overall:

In conclusion, band will be worth every second you put into it. You've joined one of the largest clubs at Mount Carmel, as well as one of the closest families there are. You may find that any time you need a place to hang out, the band room will always be the first place you think of going. No matter how intimidating you may think band is up front, you'll become accustomed to everything that happens in band, and it will become easier and easier as the time progresses. Never give up, even if the times are tough, because rough patches happen to everyone. However, band will always be there for you to enjoy and look back on as one of the greatest experiences of your high school career.