

Hamilton High School West Bands Hamilton, New Jersey

OFFICIAL BAND HANDBOOK

Hamilton High School West Bands
2720 South Clinton Avenue
Hamilton, New Jersey 08610
(609) 631-4168 x3305

Welcome Hornet Band Member and Band Parent!

We have compiled this handbook to provide you with information that we believe you will need to know about regarding the Hamilton High School West Bands. We hope you find the information contained in this handbook useful.

On behalf of the Hamilton High School Bands, we want to welcome you to the “Pride of Mercer County!” You are joining one of the top organizations within the walls of Hamilton High. You will be expected to excel, and will be given the tools to do so. You will learn a tremendous amount about yourself, and will be given the opportunity to succeed on many levels, both musical and personal. No other organization at Hamilton West can offer you anything like what we will offer you. Having said this, we feel your membership will make a positive impact on all involved, so WELCOME!

A key word from above is “membership”, because you are joining an activity that you are truly a member of, as thousands of “Hornets” that have passed through our musical ranks can attest to. For over eighty-six years, the Hamilton West Bands have stood for “Tradition, Pride and Excellence”, and we will always do our best to keep it that way. We will need 110% cooperation from you, 100% of the time. Whether you are sweating together on the field at Band Camp, competing with our Jazz Ensemble, or performing for family and friends as a part of our Symphonic Band. TEAMWORK is now a part of your vocabulary, and we wish you well in your time with us.

Sincerely,

Brian Maher, Band Director
Peter Certo, Band Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1) Course Offerings and Ensembles	Page 3
2) General Band Information.....	Page 4-6
3) Symphonic Band.....	Page 6
4) Symphonic Band Grade Policy.....	Page 7
5) Marching Band.....	Page 8-11
6) Jazz Ensemble.....	Page 12

1) Course Offerings and Ensembles

SYMPHONIC BAND - Directed by Mr. Brian Maher and Mr. Peter Certo

A year-long, “A-LEVEL” comprehensive music course. The band performs three times a year. These performances consist of a winter concert, a “Music in our schools” concert and a spring concert. All are mandatory.

The Symphonic Band is made up of wind and percussive instrument playing students. The prerequisite is participation in the 8th grade Concert Band. Students with playing experience not enrolled in 8th grade Concert Band must audition for Mr. Maher and Mr. Certo.

MARCHING BAND - Director Mr. Brian Maher, Assistant Director Mr. Peter Certo

Our award-winning Hamilton West Marching Band has been a competitive organization since the Fall of 2006, and competes in the USBands competitive marching band circuit. The band has mandatory night practices on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5:00 PM until 8:00 PM starting the Tuesday after Band Camp, and concluding the Thursday before the USBands NJ State Marching Band Championships. The Marching Band has a mandatory ten-day Band Camp, held at Hamilton High West, starting sometime after August 15th of each year. The band performs at approximately thirty performances throughout the course of a school year. These performances consist of parades, competitions and football games. All are mandatory. There are fees associated with becoming a member of the Hamilton West Marching Band, which are described in the yearly Marching Band Info Packet, which is handed out to every member prior to the start of the next season.

Entry into the Marching Band for incoming 9th graders is via recommendation of their 8th grade band director and via successful audition.

Entry into the Color Guard is by audition only. Members rehearse Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:00 PM until 8:00 PM. There are fees associated with becoming a member of the Hamilton West Band Color Guard.

JAZZ ENSEMBLE - Directed by Mr. Certo

The Hornet Jazz Band is a performance oriented ensemble designed to further develop our talented students at Hamilton High School West. Membership into the Jazz Ensemble is by audition only. Students accepted into the ensemble are introduced to a wide range of jazz literature to enhance their knowledge of improvisation, theory and the history of jazz.

2) General Band Information

Instruments

Every band member is required to own or rent their own instrument. Instruments that are property of the Hamilton Board of Education, if available, may be borrowed. If an instrument is provided to you, you are responsible for any damage or loss. Please take good care of township property.

You are responsible for having your instrument, in good condition, at every rehearsal and performance.

You are required to return any township owned instruments whenever Mr. Maher or Mr. Certo requests it.

Instrument Lockers

Hamilton West provides a storage area in the rear of the band room to place your instrument during the school day. The storage cabinets **DO NOT LOCK**, and your instruments should **NOT BE KEPT** in the band room overnight. They should be brought home daily for practice.

Tubas should always be placed back in the tuba room at the conclusion of the band period, or performance.

Percussion equipment should be placed back neatly in the percussion room at the conclusion of the band period, or performance.

Music/Music Folders:

You are responsible for all music assigned to you. You must come to every rehearsal and performance with all required music.

Music Folders should be kept in the appropriate slot in the music folder cabinet in the band room.

Bring a pencil and eraser to your band class. **NEVER** write on the music originals in anything other than light pencil. You must erase any markings upon collection of the music after a performance.

Band Websites, Emails, Calendars and Schedules

All the above items are ways in which you are notified of important information. **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO OBTAIN AND NOTE ALL INFORMATION THAT PERTAINS TO YOU AND YOUR ENSEMBLE.**

You are responsible for informing your parents of important information. Parents may also read important information on the Band's websites, via emails and may download the Band calendar from the website.

All students are required to know all information placed up on the Band websites. Students must either check their email, check the band website no less than once per week, or stop by the band office for the latest information. Parents can also call the band office at (609) 631-4168 x3305 for the latest information.

Hamilton High School West Band Website: www.hornetbands.org

Hamilton High School West Jazz Ensemble Website: www.hornetjazz.com

Hamilton High School West Band Parents' Club Website: www.hornetband.org

Hornet Band Twitter: @HornetBands

Hornet Jazz Twitter: @HornetJazz

Bus Trips

Band members must comply with all Board of Education rules and instructions given to them by Mr. Maher, Mr. Certo or any Staff or Chaperone.

Band members are to stay seated and follow all rules of behavior while on any bus.

No radios are allowed on any band bus. Expensive items, such as iPods and the like are not recommended to be brought on trips. **We are not responsible for your iPods or other devices if they are stolen during a band event.**

Performing Arts Picnic

The yearly Performing Arts Picnic. Whether a student does or does not attend the Band Banquet has no effect on that student's grade. In order for students to be eligible to attend the Banquet, they must meet the financial obligation and correctly complete and return, by any and all due dates, all permission slips.

The Band Directors reserve the right to deny picnic participation to any Band Member he feels a possible discipline problem, or to any member that is not deserving of attending the Banquet, including members not in "Good Standing" in the Band Program, i.e.: owing outstanding debts, or have unexcused absences from rehearsals or performances. (See section on attendance and grading policy, below.)

Any student who does not comply with the high school's and Board of Education's policies of grades, cutting, etc. will not be allowed to attend.

3) Symphonic Band

Instruments

Hamilton High School West owns a limited amount of wind instruments. Students are therefore expected to own or rent their own. If financial hardship exists or if a student plays an instrument that is not available to rent (Tuba, Baritone, Bari Sax) we will try to accommodate the request. Priority will be given to students also involved in our competitive Marching Band and Jazz Band.

Students are required to return any township owned instruments whenever Mr. Maher or Mr. Certo requests it.

Daily routine

Every student is to be on time to class. Upon arrival in the band room students are expected to check the chalkboard and bulletin boards for information, get your instrument/music and be seated by 2 minutes after the bell. At the end of the rehearsal students are expected to put away their music/instrument in their appropriate storage closets and wait until the bell rings to leave.

Challenges

Challenges for Symphonic Band seating may take place after the first concert (Winter Concert). No challenges will commence BEFORE the Winter Concert takes place. Challenge procedures are listed on the challenge form, available in the band room.

Attire

Symphonic Band will wear black bottoms with a white top for performances. Ladies may wear skirts that extend past the knees. Symphonic Band members need to also wear black socks with long black pants, and a black dress shoe.

Classroom Expectations

Always sit in your section (i.e. 2nd clarinet, 3rd trumpet). Even when you are not prepared, or feel ill, you must sit in your section in the Band Room. Chairs and stands are NOT TO BE MOVED in the Band room. Leave them set up as they are.

THERE IS NO EATING, DRINKING OR CHEWING GUM ALLOWED IN THE BAND ROOMS AT ANY TIME.

No cursing is allowed. Cursing will award you a Green Slip.

4) Symphonic Band Grade Policy

Grade Policy

Tests and Performances - 50%

Preparation - 40%

Participation - 10%

Class Preparation:

Students will receive a weekly grade which will start with 100 points. Points will be deducted as follows:

No instrument/ music-	5 points
Music not learned -	5 points
Folder left out -	5 points
Instrument left out -	10 points
Late to class (no pass) -	5 points
Cutting class -	15 points

Students will receive test grades for concerts and written/performance exams. Students shall be taught and expected to facilitate the following:

- A) **Physical Characteristics:** Correct embouchure, hand position, posture, breathing and proper care of their respective instruments.
- B) **Elements of Music:** Music notation and definitions of musical terms.
- C) **Performance:** Ability to tune their instrument, play selections from repertoire, play all 12 major scales.

5) Marching Band

ALL REHEARSALS AND PERFORMANCES ARE MANDATORY.

A performance is a parade, competition or football game, or any other event in which we perform. The ONLY acceptable excuses are a death in the family, or a medical situation, with a SIGNED LETTER ON HOSPITAL or a DOCTOR'S LETTERHEAD describing the reason for the absence. To be excused, the doctor's note on letterhead must be submitted to the band office no more than three days after the event missed. Unexcused absences will place you in "Not in good standing" status, which will affect your participation on our yearly band trip, end-of-year picnic and your band scholarship.

Seniors: You are allowed one excused absence from a performance in order to facilitate the following events: 1) SAT's, 2) College auditions for music majors. Proper documentation must be provided either before, or no more than three days after the event in order for it to be excused. SAT's do not excuse you for the entire day. You are required to rejoin the group at the event, even if you are late. Please note, more than one request for an excused absence under these circumstances will be denied. Also, college visitations (trips to visit a campus) that you schedule on the same day as a performance are not excused.

Missing rehearsals or performances for sports related games, practices or work are not considered excused absences. Both parent and student acknowledge that missing a band rehearsal or performance for a sports-related event will be considered a non-excused absence.

THREE LATES TO MARCHING BAND REHEARSALS CONSTITUTE ONE ABSENCE. "LATE" IS FIVE MINUTES AFTER THE CALL TIME FOR THE EVENT.

"Good Standing" Policy

A Marching Band Member is in "Good Standing" and may attend any Marching Band function when s/he does not owe money for events, or lost property, or damaged property. If damage of Board of Education property occurs, such items damaged MUST be repaired or replaced immediately. The student is not in "Good Standing" until the correction is made. Students will be placed on "Probationary Status" within the Marching Band Program until further notice.

Rules and Regulations

All Marching Band members are expected to present a positive image, not only for the school, but also for themselves. No Marching Band member should be part of any negative or disruptive behavior. **IT WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**

Once you become part of the program, people will begin to recognize you as being a Marching Band member. Be aware that what you do reflects on the program.

Keep these virtues in mind as you conduct yourself in everyday classes:

- Respect yourself. Act like young ladies and gentlemen.
- No swearing.
- No chewing gum during class, rehearsals or performances.
- Respect your elders, instructors and peers.

Please act responsibly:

- During rehearsals, performances, games, on the bus, and in class.
- When wearing your uniform (everything you do, WILL get back to us!!)
- When working with a guest choreographer or faculty member.

Reasons for suspension from the Marching Band indefinitely:

1. Inability to commit to the rehearsal/performance schedule.
2. Illegal use of drugs.
3. Use of alcoholic beverages.
4. Overt defiance of school and marching band policies.
6. Fighting.

Suspension will result in being banned from attending games with the Marching Band and all related Marching Band events.

Leadership

Leadership positions are chosen by the Band Staff. To apply, fill out a "Band Leadership Inquiry", handed out to all Band Members around May of each year. This form will be for the upcoming Band Season.

Equipment Care

A Marching Band is only as good as its equipment. That is why we must take special care of instruments, uniforms, flags, rifles, and sabers during practices and performance. Keep the band room and equipment rooms clean. Officers will be responsible in making sure that equipment is put away properly.

Fundraising

In order for the Hamilton High School West Marching Band to participate in some of the activities that we do, we require those students, who wish to participate in those activities, to either pay, or fundraise for their participation, which will be handled by the Band Parents' Club. Two of the aforementioned activities are the Annual Band Trip, and the annual Band Picnic. Many other things are paid for through the Band Parents' Club.

Students are NOT required to participate, nor will they be penalized in any way if they do not participate in any Band activity that requires fund raising and/or payment. Those students who choose to participate in those activities that require financing by the Hamilton High School West Band Parents' Club have the option of fund raising all of the required payment, paying the total amount "out-of-pocket", or combining fund raising and payment.

Every Band member will have their own individual financial record, which is kept by the current Treasurer of the Hamilton High West Band Parents' Club.

Obviously, only the profit from fund raisers will be credited to each members' account, not the total amount collected. The amount of profit differs with each fundraiser, but is usually between 40% and 50%.

All money turned in to the Band Parents' Club will belong to that association for its use as per its constitution and by-laws.

The profit in each member's individual account will be used by that member for payment, or partial payment, of the cost of the Annual Band Trip, if that student participates.

The profit in each member's individual account can be used for payment, for that student only, of the Performing Arts Picnic.

Uniforms and costumes

Marching Band musicians are provided a uniform by the Board of Education. The uniforms must be brought home after band camp, and brought to every performance in which it is needed. After the annual Memorial Day Parades, the uniforms must be brought back with a dry cleaning receipt as evidence of being dry cleaned. Uniforms not dry cleaned, or missing altogether will incur a hold placed on the students' account which follows:

Non-Dry Cleaning Fee	\$15.00
Shako	\$65.00
Shako case	\$25.00
Uniform top	\$300.00
Uniform pants	\$150.00
Uniform sash	\$35.00
Rainjacket	\$50.00

Color Guard will pay for their costume top, and will be provided a costume bottom, which they may keep after fulfilling all performances.

We have a strict rule of looking uniform when we perform. Hair will be up in a bun for all football games and performances, unless otherwise noted. Members with short hair should keep hair away from your face. No nail polish, other than clear, will be allowed. No jewelry that is visible will be allowed. Color guard must wear make-up for all performances. It must look neat and natural. (Nothing that will run off when you sweat.) Unless otherwise noted. Body glitter must be approved on a case by case performance. Personal hygiene is very important. Prepare yourself ahead of time.

Annual Marching Band Trip

The yearly band trip is a voluntary activity. Whether a student does or does not attend has no affect on that student's band grade.

In order for students to be eligible to attend the trip, they must meet all financial obligations, attend all trip rehearsals, and correctly complete and return, by any and all due dates, all trip forms.

In order for students to be eligible to attend the trip, they must also meet all high school and Board of Education policies and sanctions.

All students wishing to attend the annual band trip must be in good standing. Students that have unexcused absences from earlier performances, or have unexcused absences from band rehearsals (cuts) WILL NOT be allowed to attend the annual band trip. (See section on attendance and grading policy, below.)

All students attending the trip must perform. All students are responsible for learning their music, or they will not be allowed to attend the trip.

The Board of Education and Marching Band director reserve the right to deny trip participation to any band member they feel could cause a possible discipline problem, or to any member they feel does not deserve to attend the trip, including members not in "Good Standing" within the Band Program.

All students going on the annual Band Trip agree to abide by the rules listed under "RULES AND REGULATIONS" in the annual Band Trip Handbook. These rules supplement the "Official Band Handbook" rules and regulations for the duration of the Band Trip.

6) Jazz Ensemble

The Jazz Ensemble rehearses from November to March and performs between 10 to 15 times per year. In October, the new list of rehearsal and performance times can be found on www.hornetjazz.com.

Students interested in participating in the Jazz Ensemble should come to our informational meeting in mid-October. The exact date of this meeting will be announced at the end of September and be advertised throughout the building.

Attendance

Our competitive ensemble will have one performer per part. If a member is absent, their part will not be played by anyone else. Attendance is crucial in order to develop cohesiveness and proper balance. Rehearsals and performances are mandatory. Any student unable to commit to rehearsal or performance times will be removed from the ensemble.

Alternates

Our competitive ensemble will have 13 musicians playing wind instruments. At times students that are strong musicians but not included in the competitive ensemble will be given the opportunity to be an alternate. Alternates will rehearse with the ensemble and perform at any non competitive concert. If enough interest is shown, a second non-competitive ensemble may be formed. Members of the non-competitive ensemble will perform at concerts and be expected to attend rehearsals.

Attire

The Jazz Ensemble will compete in an all black outfit and orange tie (black pants, a long sleeved black shirt, black sox and black dress shoes). Ladies may wear a solid black dress.

Fundraising

Students are responsible for selling \$120.00 worth of fundraisers. Beside some limited funding received for busing, the Jazz Ensemble is a self sufficient group. We use the funds raised to pay for festival fees, music, upgrade to intermediate/professional instruments, equipment and supplement our busing cost.