

Wheaton Christian Grammar School

Symphonic Band Handbook

2026-2027

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August 26, 2026

Dear Band Members and Parents,

I hope you are all as excited as I am about Symphonic Band this school year! I am really looking forward to working with each one of you in creating the best sounding Junior High Band we can be. In this handbook you will find my policies and procedures of the band program as well as information concerning this school year.

Parents

Thank you for allowing your son or daughter the opportunity of playing a band instrument. Playing in a band is a unique experience. It is crucial that I have the support of parents as we partner in training your children in becoming great musicians. It is the responsibility of each parent to see that their child practices his / her instrument daily. Being an instrumentalist for over 50 years, I know that the only way to improve as a musician is to spend time practicing. A musician's expertise on an instrument is directly proportional to the time spent practicing – it's as simple as that!

Over the past several years I have been working hard toward a balanced instrumentation in Symphonic Band. We have made some great improvements within the balance and numbers of each section of the band. I will still, however, actively pursue students to fill vacancies that presently exist. We currently could use more players on the following instruments: flute, clarinet, horn, baritone, and tuba. Perhaps some of you that are in some of the "large" sections of the band would consider learning a secondary instrument for the benefit of the band. Trumpet players are probably the most likely instrumentalists that can make the switch to horn, baritone, or tuba, and sax players to flute or clarinet. Please see Mr. Wright if you are interested.

Please read through the following information very carefully. Students and their parents must turn in the signed sheet by **Monday, August 31**.

I'm looking forward to a great year together!

Sincerely,

Mr. David Wright
Director of Bands

Discipline

Band by its very name suggests oneness, teamwork, ensemble, and cooperation, with everyone striving for a common goal. This all comes at a middle school student's life when individual identity is desired. As Christians, we all recognize the importance of working together cooperatively, for one goal – bringing glory to God. A very small number of students find they cannot make this kind of sacrifice and become disruptive discipline problems in the band rehearsal. These students will not be allowed to affect the quality of learning taking place in class. Continued problems will result in that student being removed from rehearsal, and ultimately dismissed from the instrumental program. Consequences will include a one-on-one conference with the director and an after-school detention. Band members need to accept *responsibility* for their actions, good or bad. Students should be looking to glorify God and work toward the success of our band program.

Daily Rules and Procedures

The following rules are set in place to create an atmosphere of learning and success. Students who violate these rules are responsible for reducing the amount of time for rehearsal and consequently hurting the entire band.

1. Show respect to your band director and your peers.
2. Enter the band room in a quiet, courteous, and orderly manner.
3. **BE ON TIME!** Students are considered late to class if they are not **in their seats, instruments ready, music on their stands, and ready to play** by **2:38 p.m.** Class begins at 2:35 p.m.
4. When Mr. Wright is teaching there will be **no playing** or **talking**. Be a good listener and watch the conductor throughout rehearsal. *Students will be given a detention for breaking this rule!*
5. Students will warm-up appropriately on their instruments. No **blasting or over-playing**.
6. Students will not play other students' instruments. **This includes percussion instruments and keyboards.**
7. **Students' instruments are required to have an identification tag on the instrument case.** Please take care of this before your instrument is brought to school.
8. Band members will have the following at every rehearsal:
 - a. INSTRUMENT (with the necessary accessories)
 - b. ALL MUSIC
 - c. PENCIL
9. Good posture is of great importance at all times.
10. Instruments **MUST** be stored in instrument lockers when not being played at school. **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR INSTRUMENT ON THE BAND ROOM FLOOR OR IN HALLWAYS!** If you would like to lock your instrument in your instrument locker, locks are available. Please use WCGS locks only.
11. **Practice, practice, practice!** More is accomplished in band rehearsal when you have learned your music at home. Leaving your instrument at school overnight should be the exception rather than the rule.
12. Absolutely no gum, food, or drink in the band room or practice rooms. (water is OK)
13. Accept responsibility for yourself and your learning.

Grades/Points

Grades are based on an individual student's progress from at-home practicing, rehearsals, concerts, assignments, and sectionals. Points are accumulated for each activity listed above. All students are required to practice at home. **A minimum of 90-100 minutes** is required. Consistent, daily work is essential to improvement on your instrument. Practice is most effective when it is broken into smaller practice sessions. For instance, practicing 20 minutes, 5 days a week, or 30 minutes, 4 times a week is much more beneficial than 90 minutes at one time. Attendance (excluding days absent from school), punctuality, and good participation are a major part of your grading period average. Good participation means good habits in your behavior including playing at the right time, refraining from talking during teaching time, knowing your music prior to rehearsal based on practicing. Always give your very best! Colossians 3:23.

These are the main elements that determine the students' band grades:

- Participation in rehearsals
- Participation in sectionals
- Playing assignments
- Participation in concerts

Additional Opportunities

Concerts/Recitals – Students should look for opportunities to hear live music being performed. Look for opportunities to hear a professional playing your instrument. It will inspire you!

Recitals – Playing in recitals is a great way to build confidence, take on a challenge that will push the development of your skills, and help overcome the fear of performing.

Private Lessons – Every instrumentalist should consider taking private lessons on his/her instrument. Students that study privately are generally significantly farther ahead in their ability to play their instrument well compared to students that do not take private lessons. See Mr. Wright for a recommendation of local teachers for your instrument.

IGSMA Solo and Ensemble Contest – Solo and ensemble contest will be coming up on February 20, 2027. Now is a good time to begin thinking about your involvement in this contest. Mr. Wright will talk with many of you about participating in this event. It is my hope that many students will choose to participate and that we represent WCGS well in this district contest. Information will be sent home when it is available.

ILMEA District Concert Band – This is a district-wide (most of DuPage County) honors band for which all 6th-8th grade band, orchestra, and choir students can audition. You must register to audition through Mr. Wright. Auditions will be virtual (video) and must be submitted between September 16-30, 2026. Please see Mr. Wright for audition music and details.

Playing Assignments

Students will be given weekly playing assignments in their sectionals. Each week band students must play their assignment for the director either alone or in groups. Students are expected to practice the assignments at home in preparation for their weekly playing test.

Instrument Care and Maintenance

All students' instruments must be clean and in good playing condition. Students are expected to maintain proper care of their instruments throughout the school year. This includes reeds, mouthpieces, mutes, valve oil, slide cream, cork grease, etc. Music and Arts, Inc. visits our school weekly and can be utilized for repairs. I recommend the following companies for purchasing supplies: Music and Arts Center - musicarts.com (on Irving Park Road east of Rt. 53, Itasca), Musician's Friend - www.musiciansfriend.com, or Amazon - amazon.com.

Here is a list of accessories to help each student take proper care of their instrument(s):

Flute - Cleaning rod, flute, polishing cloth

Oboe - A minimum of 3 medium strength reeds, oboe swab, cork grease

Clarinet - A minimum of 4 Vandoren 2.5-3 clarinet reeds or similar, 4-reed holder, Yamaha 4C mouthpiece or similar, cork grease, mouthpiece brush, clarinet swab

Saxophone - A minimum of 4 Vandoren 2.5 saxophone reeds or similar, 4-reed holder, Yamaha 4C mouthpiece or similar, cork grease, mouthpiece brush, saxophone swab

Trumpet - La Tromba T2 valve oil or similar, cleaning snake, tuning-slide grease, mouthpiece brush, cleaning rag, Bach 7C (4th - 5th grade) or 5C (6th - 8th grade) mouthpiece.

Horn - La Tromba T2 valve oil, Holton Farkas Mouthpiece medium deep cup, cleaning snake, tuning-slide grease, mouthpiece brush, cleaning rag

Trombone - Polishing cloth, cleaning snake, cleaning rod, cheesecloth, mouthpiece brush, tuning-slide grease, Yamaha trombone slide lubricant, water spray bottle, Bach 61/2 AL or 5G (7th or 8th grade) mouthpiece.

Baritone/Tuba - La Tromba T2 valve oil, tuning-slide grease, polishing cloth, cleaning snake, mouthpiece brush

Percussion - Snare/Bell Kit, stick bag, SD1, 5A or 5B (7A for Jazz Ensemble) drumsticks, bell mallets

Rehearsal Schedule

Symphonic Band rehearses three times a week on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 2:35-3:15 p.m. Be on time! Rehearsals are mandatory and may not be missed for any reason other than absence from school. If you know you will be out of school on a particular day, please see Mr. Wright ahead of time to cover what you will miss. Missing band rehearsal to make up work in another class is absolutely prohibited.

Sectionals

All students in Symphonic Band have scheduled sectionals during one 30-minute period per week. **All sectionals are mandatory. It is critical that every band student attend these sectionals.** They are vital to the success of our band's progress.

Class Materials / Curriculum

Each student will be issued a new folder with copies of the music the band will be playing. It is the student's responsibility to take good care of this folder and music and have it present at every rehearsal and sectional. Music and folders that have been lost are subject to replacement fees.

Seating Auditions

Symphonic Band students will audition to be assigned parts that are within their range and technical ability. This is not an audition to "get into the group," but rather for part and chair assignments. Auditions for seating and part placement will take place in September and January during sectionals. Based on the results of the seating placement auditions, students will be assigned seats and specific parts within their instrument section for each semester. Students desiring to "improve" their position may do so during the second semester auditions. Mr. Wright will announce the dates for auditions once rehearsals begin.

Concert Uniforms

Performing groups will be uniform during performances. This year, Symphonic Band, Choir, and Orchestra students will wear "concert black" for performances:

Boys: Black shoes, black socks, black dress pants, black long-sleeve dress shirt with buttons.

Girls: Black shoes, black dress skirt, dress, or pants, black top.

Parent Volunteers

We need volunteers for our concerts in December and May. It is very helpful to have parental supervision for concerts and people to help tune instruments before performances. If you would like to sign-up to volunteer, email Mrs. Beth Wright at bwright@wheatonchristian.org as soon as possible.

Concerts and Important dates

The concerts and student events listed below are **mandatory** and may not be missed for any reason other than illness or a death in the family. Concert participation makes up a large percentage of the students' quarter grade. Students' grades for concerts cannot be made up except for illness or death in the family. These events are to be viewed as a final exam. Failure to attend any of these events will cause a minimum of a **one-letter drop** of a student's quarter grade.

Band Auditions (times will be assigned). Mid to Late September (during sectionals), 2026
Veterans Day Program (with Symphonic Orchestra)..... November 11, 2026
Christmas Band Concert.....7:15 p.m., Tuesday, December 8, 2026
Spring Band Concert 7:15 p.m., Thursday, May 6, 2027

All Concerts are to be held in the WCGS Commons unless noted otherwise.

In addition to the above concerts, students may **choose** to be involved in the following events:

ILMEA Audition Video SubmissionsSeptember 16-30, 2026
ILMEA Music Festival.....Saturday, November 7, 2026
IGSMA Solo and Ensemble Contest Saturday, February 20, 2027

Symphonic Band Commitment Form

I have read the preceding information. I understand and accept the commitment and expectations of becoming a member of the Symphonic Band. I also realize that I am making a one-year commitment for the 2026-2027 school year to the WCGS Symphonic Band.

Student's Signature

Parent's Signature

**Please detach this form, sign, and return to Mr. Wright by
Monday, August 31, 2026.**