

Quotes from Real Parents – “What I wish I knew when my kid was new to marching band...”

When you have a question, grab a parent of an upperclassman and ask. Or email:

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Please refer to the marching band website, www.leboband.com, for more details, necessary forms, and helpful information!

General:

- This was the best part of high school for my child, and it flew by way too fast. Football seasons feel long, but the years are short. Have fun!
- Connect with another band parent who has experience and can help answer your questions.
- I didn't realize that band dominates both Friday and Saturday nights in the fall... Fridays for the football games and two or three Saturdays for band festivals... both are very fun but you do need to plan ahead.
- If your child's instrument needs to be serviced during the summer, take it in early so it will be done before band camp begins.
- Make sure your child knows how to care for their instrument and dry it out if it gets wet. Having to replace pads or pay for extra maintenance because it was left in the case wet is not fun.
- Read ALL of the BAND updates and Mr. Cheskawich's emails. Sometimes the schedules can change slightly and if you don't keep up with the emails, your child might miss something.
- Ending times are sometimes approximate.
- Your child may need some money during band camp and the season for costume items (for spirit days during camp and for the Halloween parade) and contributions to group gifts. Some sections may go out to eat for senior recognition. Some sections also do "Secret Santa" exchanges during the holidays.
- The kids are going to march in all kinds of weather – buy yourself a good raincoat and warm boots!
- Sousaphone players should grab a microfiber towel to save their shoulders.
- VOLUNTEER! So many reasons to volunteer. Mt Lebo band parents are very inviting and encourage parents to be a part of the Band Builders. Every volunteer is appreciated. From being the chairperson of a committee to passing out cookies to the band after half time, you become part of a team that parallels your child's team. Volunteering allows you to be a part of your child's - and the band's - success. If you really want to know what's going on with your child and the band, while helping them succeed, VOLUNTEER!!!

Band Camp & Practices:

Band Camp takes place at the high school and runs Monday-Friday, August 2 – 13 / Daily Times TBA. In the past, times were M-F 8:00 am - 3:00 pm and T-Th 6:00-8:00 pm. Band Camp is mandatory for all members – for unforeseen circumstances, see Mr. Cheskawich.

- Students need water. Most kids use a gallon thermos jug. Watch for them to go on sale now, Sunglasses, hats, sunscreen and lip balm help, too. And comfortable tennis shoes are a must.
- Students need a lanyard to wear around their necks during band camp that is big enough to hold a small copy of their music. Keep an eye out at Staples or Office Max for this. For rainy days...help keep their music dry by laminating the sheets and punching holes in them to clip onto the lanyard. This is key -- even a little bit of moisture and the music is ruined and unreadable. Section Leaders will explain this to new students.
- Despite the fact that Band Camp in August is a very overwhelming and emotional time for incoming freshmen, please support and encourage your child to stick with it! The first week is definitely very hard...no doubt about it. They may cry (as my son did!), they may beg to quit (he also did this!) but by the end of the first week, they will see the light at the end of the tunnel and it all falls into place. Band gives you a community and a social network that is nothing but positive which is especially crucial when you are starting a new school. So tell your children to HANG IN THERE, BABY!!! They will love it.

Uniforms: These are provided by the school, with the exception of shoes, socks, gloves, and band t-shirts.

- If you can, get at least 2 band t-shirts for under their uniform for when they have events back to back. Also get 2 or more pairs of gloves, they get dirty and lost and buy 2 or more pairs of black crew socks.
- Make sure your child hangs up their uniform after events. Also wash it the morning after the last event of the weekend, so it will be ready for the next week. Check the back pocket of the garment bag too.
- If it has been raining during a performance, make sure to hang up wet uniforms and raincoats when you get them home.
- Find out what kind of Under Armor undergarments your student needs for cold weather under their uniform. This is different for Musicians and Guard. Sometimes consignment stores such as Plato's Closet will carry Under Armor and you can find some styles at Dunham's at a discount.
- Purchase athletic undergarments. They protect the skin from chaffing and wick moisture away from the skin.
- For Guard: Buy only one band t-shirt but consider multiples of the Guard t-shirt because they wear them on game day every week.

Football Games: In the past, we have marched at all home and away games. This year with the introduction of the Blue and Gold bands some students will only march home games and others will march all performances.

- Count on every Friday night between the end of camp and Halloween – longer if they make playoffs.
- Sections often have dinner together before home games at someone's house. The older students usually host these, so don't worry about having to do so. Do encourage your child to attend! These small group events help them to bond with the other members.
- Students should change into their uniforms AFTER eating at Section Dinners.
- For the cold games, bring your own blanket. Hand and feet warmers are great for you and your child!
- Fridays are late nights. Between the football games and going to Eat 'n Park afterwards, sometimes the kids don't get home until well after midnight. If you are a night owl, you will be fine.

Chaperoning: Parent helpers are needed at every event to keep the kids safe and things running smoothly.

- Chaperone at least one football game. You will have fun and see how great this bunch of kids is. It is easy and a great way to get to know what your kid is doing on Friday and to get to know their friends.
- Chaperones are always paired up with another parent (or multiple parents) on any given job, so no one is responsible for any given task alone.
- Chaperones are NOT responsible for disciplining the students. In the unlikely event that a student is not behaving, chaperones tell a staff member and the staff member takes care of the issue.
- If you want to be eligible to chaperone a band trip, you need to chaperone at least 3 times during the marching band season.
- You must have your clearances on file with the school in order to chaperone. The MLBB website has more information or ask the Co-VPs. It is easy to get them and they are good for five years. If you're not sure if your clearances have expired, you can email Ms. Gina Stein (gstein@mtlisd.net) in the high school attendance office and she will check for you. Ms. Stein is a great resource and will help you complete your clearances. Detailed clearances information can be found at Leboband.com under "Quick Links."

Eat 'n Park:

- The students go to Eat 'n Park after most games and some festivals. It is well-lit and many parent chaperones go too, so it's not as bad as it sounds to let your 14-year old stay out until after midnight.
- Given that it's so late, if you're not going along, have your child ask around to see if another parent can drive them home. It is usually easy to set up carpools week-to-week with each parent taking a turn.

- Not every band member goes after every event no matter what your child tells you. There are parents who limit the ENP outings for their underclassmen and gradually increase the number of outings and the amount of time they stay out.
- Remind your child to tip the wait staff. They put up with a lot on Friday nights.
- Students are NOT permitted to wear their uniforms to ENP. Make sure they have a change of clothes.

Fundraising (i.e., Fundraising Credit): Students can buy/sell gift cards to accumulate “fundraising credit” to offset the cost of the band trip each year. Fundraising credit is automatically put into each student’s account and rolls over each year.

- Buy Giant Eagle or Shop ‘n Save gift cards early and often. Use them to buy other gift cards for large purchases. Use them for holiday shopping lists and when you need home renovations or appliance purchases. Your trip credit will add up quickly with these large purchases.
- If you make a trip payment with a check, and your child earns fundraising credit later in the year, you can be reimbursed from his or her fundraising credit account before May 31.
- Trip chaperones have to pay their own way so if you are interested in chaperoning a trip, start fundraising in earnest right away.