

IV. ATTENDANCE

(from the Band Handbook)

ATTENDANCE PHILOSOPHY

Maximum attendance is absolutely essential to the success of the marching band. Our pursuit of excellence in performance can only be best realized given maximum attendance that permits effective use of rehearsal time. We schedule the minimum number of rehearsals needed to sustain the quality and educational validity of our style and scope of band program. Thus, no rehearsal is *extra* or *unneeded*.

Unnecessary individual absences have adverse effects on the success of the entire program. It is impossible to make changes and perfect the show when there is an unnecessary *hole*. A hole affects the absent person AND all who march near that spot. No matter how well a particular individual knows the show, the success of the whole process is interactive, dependent on everyone to be performed precisely and effectively.

Detailed planning results in a schedule released months in advance that is updated as needed to facilitate planning for all. The schedule and report times are reviewed each week. Schedules and updates are on the marching band website and are sent out via email throughout the season and school year.

The decision whether or not an absence is excused or unexcused is that of the band director. For clarification, the following absences are among those categorized as **UNEXCUSED**:

1. Work. As an educator, the band director strongly supports work experience under reasonable parameters during high school. Many band members work. Nearly all employers cooperate when planning their schedules if notified well in advance of scheduled school-related events, including band practices and performances. The band member is responsible to make these necessary arrangements in advance.
2. Spectator at music concerts or sporting events
3. Routine medical or dental appointments
4. Non-emergency medical specialist appointments
5. Homework/studying
6. Senior or other picture appointments
7. Routine Scout or other club/group activity meeting or events
8. Routine family chores, including non-emergency baby-sitting
9. Birthday celebrations (band member or family member)
10. College Fairs
11. Exchange student activities
12. Driver's Education classes
13. Other evening classes

ATTENDANCE POLICY

We have adopted a standard, simple, and clear attendance policy, defining minimum standards essential for the educational success of the Mt. Lebanon Marching Band as a whole and of its individual student members.

All practices and performances are mandatory. Any request for an exception must be submitted via parent email and written note and approved by the director **one full-week (7 days) in advance** of the conflicting date, except in emergencies.

SUMMER REHEARSALS AND EVENTS

Vacations, summer sports league games, special family events and illness are excused absences. Work is not. Concerts and spectator sports are not. Each absence must be verified. Members are asked to submit an absence awareness form at the beginning of the season. Any changes should be brought to the attention of the director seven days in advance of a known absence from a summer rehearsal or event as a courtesy to help our record keeping and rehearsal planning.

BAND CAMP AND FALL REHEARSALS – ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY

UNEXCUSED ABSENCE FROM ANY SCHEDULED REHEARSAL

- **FIRST OFFENSE:** Warning and parental notification.
- **SECOND OFFENSE:** Warning and parental notification in writing with copy sent to building principal.
- **THIRD OFFENSE:** Suspension from participation for the balance of the season, including any trip and band banquet.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCE FROM ANY PERFORMANCE

- **FIRST OFFENSE:** Suspended from participation for the balance of the season, including any trip and band banquet.

LATE AND EARLY DISMISSAL

Report time for practice is defined as **10 minutes before the posted start time**. Rehearsal will start at posted time defined by presence at designated area with needed instrument/equipment. An UNEXCUSED LATE is defined as arriving at the practice area 5 minutes after posted start time with an unexcused reason. An UNEXCUSED EARLY DISMISSAL is defined as leaving early from rehearsal for an unexcused reason. Please note that it takes individuals a few minutes at the beginning of rehearsals to set up and at the end of rehearsals to tear down. Tear down starts at the end of scheduled rehearsal time and amount of time/responsibility varies by section.

UNEXCUSED LATE OR EARLY DISMISSAL FROM A REHEARSAL OR PERFORMANCE

- **FIRST OFFENSE:** Warning and parental notification.
- **SECOND OFFENSE:** Counts as one *Unexcused Absence from a Rehearsal or Performance*. See consequences listed above.

A marching band member not displaying an acceptable performance level due to lack of attendance or attitude may be suspended from participation at any point during the season. A member may request an excused absence based on unique or extremely extenuating circumstances. If permitted, it will be recorded as excused. If not, it will be recorded as unexcused with consequences as listed above. Please have the courtesy to discuss each situation with the director as far in advance as possible.

An unaccounted-for absence will be categorized as *unexcused* until determined otherwise. When an absence occurs during the school week, the band member is responsible for the courtesy of informing the director of the reason for the absence upon return to school or a band event. The same responsibility applies to late arrivals and early dismissals. The hassle of *tracking down* students to validate an absence, late, or early dismissal that may or not be excused is time-consuming and can be more frustrating than the absence itself. Any absence other than illness **must be verified by a parent email AND written note.**

DISMISSAL FROM AN EVENT

As important information for new members and a crucial reminder for returning members, please review the *Dismissal From an Event Policy*. This policy addresses members desiring not to return from an event on the bus with the band, instead returning with parents or other individuals. Given the immense responsibility involved in transporting students to and from an event safely and successfully as well as the legal and liability perspectives involved, it is easy to see why this policy is an essential component of the operation of the marching band and taken so seriously by the director, staff, and chaperones. This policy exists in the best interests of all members and families and is in effect for each event.

DISMISSAL FROM AN EVENT POLICY

From a legal and liability perspective, the school district and band director prefer that all marching band members travel to and from events on the buses provided and remain with the band through the conclusion of the event. Dismissal from an away event, in other words – not returning on the band buses, is an exception granted and permitted only given the following procedure:

1. Submit a written request from the parent for dismissal to the director or head chaperone PRIOR to boarding buses at Mt. Lebanon High School.
2. Note the dismissal on the bus roll list that will be cross-referenced with the master list of those submitting notes.
3. BOTH the band member and parent/designate must “check out” with the head chaperone to verify the student's release, thus no one is left behind.
4. Students can legally only be released to other individuals or non-immediate family members if a parent VERBALLY gives permission to the director. PLEASE make this verbal contact & verification with the director well in advance of initially boarding buses at the high school to avoid delaying departure or a difficult situation on site. This verbal verification best eliminates the possibility of forgery of notes or unknown release to others when the parent is expecting the student to be returning to the high school on the band buses. Parent and student understanding

and cooperation within these legal constraints will help avoid difficult situations.

5. Students receiving an early dismissal are responsible for arrangements regarding proper return and storage of their instruments, uniforms, and equipment upon arrival back at school.
6. This policy is in effect for EVERY marching band performance.
7. Student violation of this policy will result in referral to both the parent and principal.

LATE RETURN FROM AN EVENT

1. Parents, be alert for the posted schedule for each away event.
2. An estimated return time will be posted, based on the director's best speculation given available information, including distance, traffic, number of groups performing, site logistics, etc.
3. If, due to unusual circumstances, the band's return is projected to be more than 30 minutes past the posted time, the students will be instructed to notify parents.