

Tips for 2016-2017 MHS Band & Guard Parents

Welcome to the MHS Band & Guard Family! You will spend a lot of time over the next year with the parents, students, and directors who make up this award-winning program. If you are new to the Band & Guard program, we realize it can be a little overwhelming at times, so here are some tips to let you know what to expect. Even if you are a seasoned Band & Guard parents, there might be a few good reminders in here for you, too!

BAND WEBSITE

Much of the information you are looking for will be on the MHS Band website, www.mcneilband.org. Take a few minutes now to familiarize yourself with the website and check it regularly. All email announcements are posted on the website, and often, you will find what you need without needing to contact someone.

The website includes all contact information for Booster Club officers and committee chairs, Booster Club By-laws, the band calendar, fundraising event details, important forms, and lots of great photos and videos of band performances.

BAND CALENDAR

Go to the band calendar **now** and put all the important dates on your personal calendar: <http://www.mcneilband.org/calendar>. Doing this now will save you a lot of time later! There are also instructions on the website on how to sync the calendar to your smartphone.

SOCIAL MEDIA

You can get updates about the band program, contest results, as well as bus arrival times after away football games and contests by liking/following the Band & Guard program on social media:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AlumniOfMcNeilMaverickBand>

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/McNeilHSBand>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/McNeilHSBand>

STUDENT PICK-UP AFTER PRACTICES, GAMES and CONTESTS

After practices, students walk from the practice field to the band hall to put away instruments, get books/homework, and other items. Expect your student to be ready to go about 15 minutes after the stated practice end time. If your student is in the

Percussion Front Ensemble, add a few more minutes to the pick-up time since they have more equipment to move back to the band hall from the practice field.

After games and contests, students are expected to enter the band hall to properly hang up their uniforms as well as put away instruments and equipment. Please don't encourage your student to skip out on their duties so you can leave early! When everyone, including parents, help out, we ALL get to go home sooner.

Sometimes after home football games, the students will gather in the band hall to watch a recording of the halftime show and get feedback from the directors. This allows time for the after football game traffic to diminish and makes better use of the time we would all be sitting in our cars adding to the traffic congestion.

Please do not pull into the parking lot directly outside of the band hall doors or in the lane closest to the side of the band hall to pick up your student when we have contests and away football games.

These are roadways and parking areas that need to be used by the band truck to unload instruments and equipment. Blocking these access points will delay the unloading of the truck; therefore, we will all get home faster if you park and stand away from the band hall entrance area!

Also, your car will be less likely to get dinged by an instrument case as kids walk between cars to get from the buses to the band hall. 😊

CARPOOLING IS YOUR FRIEND

We can't stress enough how much carpooling will save your life and your sanity this year. Whenever possible, carpool for marching camp, after-school practices, early morning sectionals and any contests or events.

The early and late drives to the band hall can spread you thin, so definitely make an effort to find parents/students who live near you and can share rides. We have created a carpool sign-up page on the band website to make it easy for you to coordinate carpools.

It is **easy** to use: simply enter your contact and neighborhood information and then click on the "Carpool List" button on the screen to see a list of people interested in carpooling, by neighborhood.

From this list, you can identify band families near you and use their contact information to set up carpools for summer camp or the school year. The carpool sign-up and list can be found here: <http://www.mcneilband.org/carpool>. Be sure to check the list several times as more families have an opportunity to sign-up over the next few weeks.

VOLUNTEER

Running a high achieving program takes an incredible amount of work and dedication from the students, staff, and parent volunteers. The Band & Guard Program could not do what it does without a large parent volunteer base.

WE WELCOME PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND THERE IS A ROLE FOR EVERYONE!

Please sign up to help with chaperoning, hospitality, costumes & uniforms, Spirit Wear, fundraisers, Pit Crew, etc. Not only will you help the band program continue at the high level of excellence it has maintained the years, but you'll also enjoy the experience a whole lot more. We promise!

Volunteering will allow you to get to know other parents and students, will allow you to get familiar with how the program operates behind the scenes, and provide you with some of the best experiences you can have as a member of the McNeil Band Family.

Go to the band website and sign-up to volunteer using our on-line sign-up tool: <http://www.mcneilband.org/volunteers>. **WE NEED YOU AND WANT YOUR HELP!**

BOOSTER MEETINGS

A great way to know what is going on with the McNeil Band & Guard is to attend the booster meetings. There are four meetings on the calendar for the year, but additional dates may be added.

Please put these dates on your personal calendar!

COMMUNICATION

You will notice that the Band Staff communicates via email frequently. Please read these emails entirely! You will gain a tremendous amount of information about the program and schedules if you read these messages.

In weekly announcements, you will find practice and sectional schedules as well as detailed itineraries about Friday night football games and contests once those begin.

The Parent Volunteer Leadership Team also sends out important messages about volunteer opportunities, schedules, fundraising activities, and other pertinent issues.

While it can be overwhelming, they are striving to keep you and your family informed of the news that may affect you.

GAMES AND CONTESTS

Please come out and support the students at their games, contests, and concerts! It's a blast! It means a lot to the students when they can hear you cheering for them from the stands.

Students are fed by our wonderful hospitality team before each football game and during contests, depending on schedules and performance times. If you don't have season tickets for home football games, feel free to come sit in the band area during halftime so you have a good view of the show.

At away football games, we walk over to the home side and sit in the band area so we can see our students perform. At contests, look for other McNeil Band & Guard parents and sit with them, even if you don't know them. It makes it much more exciting to cheer for the band when we are in a group, and it makes it easier for the kids to see us from the field as well.

Have team spirit - make a spirit flag you can wave or make a sign, wear the school colors, and please be **dedicated to excellence** by cheering on all the schools out on the field and being friendly towards parents from other band programs.

We all share a unique bond and you'll find a fun camaraderie in it. To get live updates on band contests you can check out www.live.txbands.com.

CHECKOUT AND AFTER-SCHOOL PRACTICE

The last 15-20 minutes of each after-school practice is typically when the band will do a full run through of their marching show. It is exciting to watch these and see the progression of the show over the season as they learn more of the parts.

We encourage you to stop by early when you are picking up your student and watch the end of a practice. The practice field is the paved field located next to the student parking lot, close to the band hall.

It will be easy to find because you will hear the band playing loudly! The band program has some of the hardest working kids on campus. You'll understand why after you watch a few practices.

FLEXIBILITY

No matter what we tell you and what the weekly announcement sheet says, things may change or get adjusted. Sometimes you won't know about the changes until the day they happen.

Remaining flexible will preserve your sanity. Bring along snacks and water, keep a book or smartphone with you in case you need to wait longer than expected, join a carpool and jump in to help where you can - it makes the time go by faster! 😊

We look forward to a fun and successful year with the McNeil Band & Guard. If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to contact us.

All contact information is available at <http://www.mcneilband.org/directors> or <http://www.mcneilband.org/boosters>. Go Mavs!