



**William Mason High School
Competitive Winter Guard
2025-26 Handbook**

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INTRODUCTION

The Competitive Winter Guard is an elite ensemble made up of an amazing group of student color guard members that work hard to achieve a high level of performance, nurtured through a supportive and welcoming environment. Participation is audition-only, open to high school students with color guard experience. The directors and staff of the color guard program are committed to offering students a world class performance opportunity in a student centered learning environment. Welcome to the 2025-26 Competitive Winter Guard!

Mason City Schools Band Directors

Avious Jackson - Director of Bands, jacksonav@masonohioschools.com
Jason Sleppy - Marching Band Director, sleppyj@masohohioschools.com
Zach Hinson - MHS Band Director, hinsonz@masonohioschools.com

Winter Guard Staff

Erica Sleppy - Winter Guard Director, sleppye@masonohioschools.com
Molly Brausch-Bradner - Assistant Winter Guard Director
Hanna Andrews - Winter Guard Instructor
Conard LaPrete - Winter Guard Instructor

POLICIES

Attendance Policy & Absence Classification

Attendance is a vital component of a successful competitive program. Absences, no matter the reason, have a negative impact on the achievement and environment of the entire group. The goal of the absence classification policy is to ensure student safety by logging their whereabouts when the program is responsible, promote time appropriate student/parent to director communication, exercise understanding and grace with conflicts, and promote a high attendance rate to ensure the success of the entire organization.

An absence is anytime a student is not physically present in a scheduled rehearsal time. This includes a student not being present for a portion of rehearsal (tardy or leaving early), sitting out of a rehearsal, as well as not being present for an entire rehearsal. All absences are classified as *excused* or *unexcused*. Excused absences are approved by a director and do not have a negative impact on a student's participation. Unexcused absences may result in the student being removed from their placement in the show, being removed from a leadership position, and/or not being allowed to participate in upcoming performances, competitions, activities, and/or events. If a student has missed out on enough rehearsals to fall behind, regardless of being excused or unexcused, the director team may deem it appropriate to move the student to an alternate position.

Below provides some examples of excused and unexcused absences. This is not an exhaustive list, and special circumstances may change the classification of a certain conflict. Potential unexcused absences are dealt with on a case-by-case basis, and exceptions can be warranted and must be approved by the director team.

- Excused Absence Examples: Illness, conflicts approved by a director, death in the family, and some Mason City Schools events (band and choir concerts, etc.). These absences are communicated to the director prior to the absence when possible and approved.
- Unexcused Absences Examples: Absent with no communication, work, homework, birthday dinners, vacations, family gatherings, and concerts.

The student/family will communicate known absences at least 2 weeks in advance and report absence due to illness prior to rehearsal time. All absences must be reported to Erica Sleppy, Winter Guard Director via email (sleppy@masonohioschools.com).

The latest and most up to date calendar is always the [Competitive Winter Guard Season Calendar](#). You should bookmark or sync this calendar and check it often.

Winter Guard Rehearsal Attendance Expectations

1. Arrive to rehearsal 15 minutes before rehearsal start time to help set up and organize.
2. Plan to be picked up 15 minutes after rehearsal end time to help take down and organize.
3. Communicate ALL absences and lateness to the Winter Guard Director in a timely manner.

Fill out the following Competitive Winter Guard Absence Agreement Form by Sunday, December 7th, 2025.

[Competitive Winter Guard Absence Agreement Form](#)

Rehearsal & Performance Attire

Practice Clothing

Winter Guard Practice Attire Uniform:

- All black, form-fitting clothing that covers the majority of the midriff. Exceptions will be communicated.
- Minimize the use of logos where possible.
- Use of skin-tone dance footwear can be approved by the director.
- Example → Black Tank Top and Black Leggings

Performance Blacks Uniform:

- Black Logo Tank, Black Leggings, Windbreaker
- To be worn for special rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and other important occasions.
- Exceptions due to weather and formalities will be communicated on a case by case basis.

Performance Uniform

- Uniform: Current season's competition uniform or performance blacks.
- Under Layers: Required undergarments per show design.
- Hair: Required hair per show design.
- Makeup: Required hair per show design.
- Nail Polish: No nail polish allowed for any performance setting, unless decided per show design.
- Jewelry: No jewelry allowed for any performance setting. Small, neutral colored studs can be allowed, if checked by the director team on a case by case basis, and per show design.
- Facial Hair: Per show design. Male members may need to shave to show makeup.
- Shoes: Black flip flops (review consumables) for before and after competition performances.
- Gloves: Required for all members. Color should adhere to natural skin tone.

The uniform standards are in place to ensure uniformity during performances. Modifications can be made by the directors in case of medical, health, religious or cultural needs.

MODES OF COMMUNICATION

1. William Mason Guard Email: williammasonguard@gmail.com
 - a. Weekly Update Emails specific to the CWG team.
2. Student Communication
 - a. Student leaders create a members-only Group Me that contains helpful reminders and announcements. This is separate from staff communication.
3. CWG Member Remind
 - a. Day-of and weekly reminders for the CWG team.

FINANCIAL INFO, FEE SCHEDULE & REFUND POLICY

Competitive Winter Guard Fees are required in order for our group to perform as an elite, nationally competitive ensemble. Mason City Schools does not provide funds for the winter guard program. Our Competitive Winter Guard Fees are allocated to cover the costs of our show development, clinician and technician fees, design and production of floor tarp and props, competition fees, bus transportation to competitions, hotel stays, and support for our students while competing. This year the Competitive Winter Guard will participate in WGI and MEPA events. Due to the select and smaller nature of the Competitive Winter Guard, the program cannot waive or scholarship student fees. The Competitive Winter Guard is not a co-curricular class (like marching band), and it is not a requirement for students to participate in the marching band.

1. Accept full responsibility for the total fees associated with this program of \$1600.00.
2. Submit all payments on time according to the payment schedule. Note, PaySchools is the preferred method of payment for fees but if necessary, you can submit a check to the director payable to Mason City Schools. Checks must include your student's name and student ID number for accurate processing. No cash will be accepted.

Fee 1 Due Dec 15: \$400.00 | via PaySchools or check to Mason City Schools

Fee 2 Due Jan 15: \$600.00 | via PaySchools or check to Mason City Schools

Fee 3 Due Feb 15: \$600.00 | via PaySchools or check to Mason City Schools

All fees are non-refundable after the due date that is listed.

3. Additional Required Consumable Items:

- The cost of these items is not included in the \$1600 fee.
- Charles River Windbreaker Guard Jacket (w/name) from Friday Threads (group order will be placed soon)
- Tights (group order will be placed soon)
- Gloves (can reuse from fall season or buy new)
- Flip Flops (will need to purchase on your own and turn in)
- Rifle (can reuse from fall season if in good condition or buy new)
- Sabre (can buy your own or rent school-owned for the season)
- Flag Bag (can reuse from fall season if in good condition or buy new)
- Hair & Makeup Products (on your own; lookbook will be sent out when finalized)

Email Mr. Sleppy at sleppyj@masonohioschools.com for financial questions and concerns.

MEMBER REPRESENTATION & SOCIAL MEDIA

CWG Members represent their team, school, and the marching arts community both on and off the field. Students are expected to demonstrate respect, discipline, and teamwork in all settings. This includes maintaining a positive online presence, as social media can impact personal and team reputations. Inappropriate content or behavior online reflects poorly on the entire group. By upholding these standards, students contribute to a respectful, inclusive, and proud team environment.

**Fill out the Competitive Winter Guard Conduct Agreement Form
by Sunday, December 7th, 2025.**

[Competitive Winter Guard Conduct Agreement Form](#)