

Marengo Community High School

Band Handbook



2025 - 2026

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“Practice does not make perfect, it makes permanent.”

Marengo Community High School Philosophy

Education is a process, which includes observation, study, research, work experience, evaluation and theorization. This process also includes motivation, inspiration, and challenge. Our high school has the responsibility for educating all youth regardless of race, sex, creed, color, economic level, or physical and mental ability. Our school will promote students' growth and success within intellectual, occupational, personal-social, aesthetic and physical worlds. Programs and classes will be provided to meet the needs of a diverse student population within budget restraints.

Marengo Community High School Band Philosophy

Band is designed with six basic concepts in mind.

- Music is a science. It is exact, specific, and it demands exact acoustics. A conductor's full score is a chart, a graph which indicates frequencies, intensities, volume changes, melody, and harmony all at once and with the most exact control of time.
- Music is mathematical. It is rhythmically based on the subdivisions of time into fractions which must be done instantaneously, not worked out on paper.
- Music is a foreign language. Most of the terms are in Italian, German, or French; and the notation is certainly not English--but a highly developed kind of shorthand that uses symbols to represent ideas. The semantics of music is the most complete and universal language.
- Music is history. Music usually reflects the environment and times of its creation--often, even the country and/or racial feeling.
- Music is physical education. It requires fantastic coordination of fingers, hands, arms, legs, lip, cheek, and facial muscles in addition to extraordinary control of the diaphragmatic, back, stomach, and chest muscles, which respond instantly to the sound the ear hears and the mind interprets.
- Music is all these things, but most of all, music is art. It allows a human being to take all of these technically difficult techniques and use them to create emotion. That is one thing science cannot duplicate: humanism, feeling, emotion.

ENSEMBLES

Marching Band

All members of the Marengo Band are required to participate in the marching band as it is an integral part of each student's learning experience. The marching band performs for pregame and halftime at all home football games. In addition, the marching band performs at several marching band festivals throughout the state of Illinois, the Marengo Settlers' Days, and the Marengo Memorial Day Parade every year. Band members are required to be at all outside rehearsals including sectionals and band camp prior to the start of school.

Concert Band

Upon completion of the marching band season in October, all band members will audition for chair placement in the Concert Band program, held between November and May. The Concert bands perform in Marengo with a holiday concert, the pasta dinner concert, and a spring concert, with a few performances out of town. Students are encouraged to participate in optional events such as: Solo and Ensemble Contest, ILMEA Honors Band, McHenry County Honor Band, and KRC Band Festival.

Jazz Band

Jazz Band is a completely volunteer group and is open to all band students wishing to perform. Jazz Band will start after the conclusion of the marching season and will perform at the Pasta Dinner. Future performances might be added as the year continues.

Pit Band

The Pit Band is a completely volunteer group and performs the musical score for the Marengo High School Spring Musical. The Pit Band will begin practicing outside of the school day in the weeks prior to the Spring Musical.

Percussion Ensemble

The percussion ensemble is a volunteer group for students who want to specialize in percussion instruments. This group meets after school and performs in concerts and competitions. All instruments are percussion, but any student who wants to join may join and learn a new instrument if needed.

Pep Band

All students are required to perform in the Pep Band. This group will rehearse during the school day and perform at four to eight home basketball games, in addition to pep assemblies and other possible events that might come up.

Winter Guard

The winter guard is a completely volunteer group that meets outside of the school day. This group incorporates color guard skills with dance in order to create a unique, competitive group. This group begins rehearsing after the marching season and attends multiple competitions and other performances. This group will operate contingent on the coach's availability and student interest.

CLASS RULES

Be on time to class with music, pencil, and instrument

- On time is in seat when bell rings with all materials

No homework will be allowed during class or other outside material

- If you have forgotten your instrument you will be expected to participate in rehearsal like you have your instrument

No talking while director is on the podium

- If you have a question simply raise your hand

At no time will you mark on any school property

- This includes walls, stands, boards, acoustical treatment, etc...

No gum, food, drink, running around, or other types of horseplay in the music wing

You must sit with proper playing posture

At no time will you play a school instrument that is not assigned to you without asking the director

No one is allowed in the office unless assigned by the director

Instruments must be properly swabbed out, put away in their cases and placed in their assigned location.

Because of the nature of the organization, band discipline must be strict! Band students and parents must believe in the ideals, principles, and philosophy of the organization. Each member must always be aware of good behavior. Any misconduct casts a bad light on the school, community, and band program. Any member who casts discredit to the organization by his/her conduct or actions in band, in another class, or on a trip, shall be subject to dismissal from the band program, or may lose a privilege within the program.

AUDITIONS

Each student will be required to perform an audition at the end of 1st semester for chair placement in the concert bands. Specific requirements will be posted in the band room prior to auditions. The audition results will be posted following the conclusion of all auditions.

MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT NEEDS

Each student must bring to class everyday, their pencil, their instrument or mallets, reeds, oils, mouthpieces, mutes, and all music. Do not leave any materials you might need in the hallway or the lockers. Please bring them to your class for easy access without disturbing the rest of the class. During marching band season, students will be required to have their drill with them at all times. Students will need to have an active SmartMusic account in order to practice at home for the weekly grades.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Students must travel to all performances with the ensemble unless there is a specific need, such as another school event on the same day. It is the policy of Marengo Community High School that all students riding a bus to an activity are required to return to the high school on the same bus unless they have written approval from their parent or guardian. Students may ride home from an event with their legal guardian once the student and parent present a written note and sign out with the director or chaperone in person. If a student wishes to travel home with another student's parent/guardian, the principal, dean, or other administrative personnel prior to the event must countersign written approval from the student's guardian stating that he/she gives permission for their child to travel home with the stated other guardian. Students may under no circumstances transport themselves to an event or ride with or without any other minor/student.

ELIGIBILITY POLICY

This is a class first and foremost, required after school events must be attended regardless of eligibility as these events and rehearsals are considered part of the students' performance grade. If a student is not eligible, they cannot miss any school time or join any volunteer ensembles.

LOCKERS

Lockers are for instruments first. If after that there is room for other items, you can store other items. At no time will you share your locker combination or locker with other students (unless assigned). The lockers are a privilege and can be taken away. Lockers are the property of MCHS and as administrator of the lockers the director has the right to search the lockers for proper care of equipment. If other inappropriate materials are found, they will be reported to the proper authorities. These lockers also should be used to secure valuables during performances. Do not leave purses, jewelry, or wallets unattended in the band room. Lockers should be cleaned out weekly. Do not leave food or drinks in

lockers. Instruments will be stored in an assigned locker with a band lock properly secured. No other locks are allowed.

INSTRUMENTS

Instruments are required on a daily basis. If an instrument is in need of repair it must be taken care of in a timely fashion. Some repair shops will offer a loaner until the instrument is repaired. Students are responsible for cleaning, oiling, adjusting screws or any other general maintenance. Improper storage or other excessive abuse will be considered vandalism and will be reported to proper authorities. If a school owned instrument is being used, it is the responsibility of the student using it to maintain it and, when needed, inform the director of needed repairs. If repairs must be done, the student assumes payment responsibility to ensure all working parts.

PERFORMANCES

You will sit with your section and be ready to play.

All rules for the classroom as well as MCHS apply at all performances no matter where or when they may be located.

Drum majors, section leaders, and soloists will model and support these rules or sacrifice their position as an officer or their solo in our band program. Students will abide by these rules when corrected by a drum major or section leader. Failure to do so is the same as being insubordinate to the director.

BAND CAMP

There will be a required summer band camp for all students enrolled. This is an important week where we get over 40 hours of rehearsal time before the beginning of the school year and learn the majority of the show both musically and visually. If a student is not able to attend camp, their spot in the show might be forfeited. If there are any conflicts, please contact the director as soon as possible.

WEEKLY NIGHT REHEARSAL

There will be a weekly night rehearsal to complement the in-school class. This rehearsal is a requirement for the class and any issues should be resolved before the beginning of band camp. Work or homework will not be excused and will be considered an unexcused absence as all dates were given well in advance.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

The [Absence Request Form](#) must be filled out at the beginning of each concert cycle (band camp for marching season & first week of November for concert season) for absences known to the family. If a student is involved in a sport or activity that would interfere with participating in all band events, please look at both schedules as soon as they are made available to find any conflicts. If a performance or rehearsal must be missed after the beginning of the concert cycle, the request form and an email from the parents must be turned in **2 weeks** prior to the event missed. Of course the earlier they can be turned in the better. If the form is turned in after the two weeks it will not be considered excused – NO EXCEPTIONS. If an emergency occurs, a letter or email must be turned in by the second class day the student is back to school. Remember no excuse, no make-up! Emergencies consist of a death in the family, family emergency, or sickness.

The music department follows the same hierarchy as the athletics here, meaning the priority list is as follows (from least to most important): Practices/Rehearsals, Regular Game/Performance, State/Conference Game/Performance. Students should not miss a performance/game for a practice/rehearsal for any sport/activity, however students should leave earlier/come late to another event as soon as their role in the performance/game has concluded.

Work will never be considered an excused absence. Band is still a class when it meets out of school time and you cannot miss school for work. Please give your schedule to your employer the minute you can and talk through those dates. Homework will also never be considered an excused absence. Everyone has homework and workloads from other classes. It is your responsibility to make sure your schedule works.

MAKE-UPS

Make up work will only be permitted for an excused absence. In the case of suspension only performances can be made up. Make up work will be assigned upon acceptance of the excuse notification. Most make-ups will be either a paper, a lesson during lunch, or a recording of a student practicing the current band music at home; this will be determined by the director, not the student.

UNIFORMS

Marching

The school provides the following marching band uniform parts for each student:

1. Coat
2. Gauntlets
3. Bibbers (pants)
4. Shako w/Plume
5. Black Band Shirt (One will be provided your freshman year. Any additional shirts needed are at the student's expense)

Each student is responsible for his/her uniform. Uniforms must be kept, clean and hung properly at all times. There are to be no alterations to the band shirts. Any damaged uniform part will be replaced at the student's cost.

The following uniform parts (if not already owned), must be purchased by the student through the Band Department at the time of uniform fitting – with exception to black socks: (All money is due at fittings or the conclusion of band camp)

1. Black Shoes (\$40.00) – Freshman year purchase or as needed
2. Black Gloves (\$3.00)
3. Marengo Band T-Shirt (\$15.00) – As needed
4. Black Socks – no ankle socks (you purchase on your own)
5. Non-baggy shorts must be worn underneath the uniform (purchase on your own)

The Marengo Marching Indians uniform must be worn with pride and respect at all times. As such, the following guidelines/rules are required at all times when wearing the uniform:

1. No eating or drinking while in uniform (except water)
2. No makeup, jewelry, or nail polish (this includes facial jewelry)
3. All hair must be concealed underneath hat
4. Hats must be worn forward at all times
5. Students must remain quiet and respectful at all times, representing MCHS with their best possible behavior
6. When in a performance setting, all coats must be zipped up and fully buttoned. The director alone will decide if and when the coats maybe taken off, completely or partially

Concert

All Students must provide their own concert attire and must consist of the following:

Ladies: White blouse, black skirt/slacks, black hose/socks, black shoes, all skirts must be below the knees. A black dress that is suitable for school can also be worn.

Men: White button, long sleeved, collared shirt, black slacks, black shoes, black socks, and optional “Sunday Best” neck-tie.

GRADING POLICY-EXPECTATIONS

Unlike many classes, this class is based on rehearsal and performance and will be graded as such. Here are the expectations for this class:

* Concert Attendance Papers – Three Papers for the semester. Each paper is worth 5% for a total of 15% at the end of the year. See the next section for details.

* Reflection Papers – Two Papers for the semester. Each paper is worth 5% for a total of 10% at the end of the year. See the next section for details.

* Performances – You are expected to attend all performances. If you have an unexcused absence from a performance your grade will be lowered to a F until make-up work is completed.

* Rehearsals – You are expected to attend all rehearsals. If you have an unexcused absence from a rehearsal your grade will be lowered by a letter grade until make-up work is completed.

* Repertoire Exams – These grades constitute in class playing, out of class sectionals, auditions, scale exams, etc. and will be the majority of the student's grade. This can also include worksheets, reading assignments, and the like.

*Weekly Practice - We will begin to implement SmartMusic this year, which grades the student on practicing at home with a weekly practice assignment. If students cannot complete this at home, they must take the weekly assessment on their own time before school, during lunch, or after school and it must be scheduled with Mr. Stellmach ahead of time.

Please realize this class and group is based on rehearsals and performances. Unlike other classes, there is no book to read, no homework to turn in late. When you miss a rehearsal or performance, there is no way to get the same experience.

CONCERT ATTENDANCE/REFLECTION PAPERS

Watching other music groups perform is the only way to expose yourself to a wide variety of music. You are required to watch three (3) groups by the end of both semesters. You are to write a small paper about: who you saw, what they performed, and what you thought of their performance. Papers must be at least one page, double spaced. Papers must be turned in no later than 2 weeks after the performance. If you saw this event during the summer it is due the first week of school.

Reflecting on the accomplishments of the year so far and planning your next goal is often the first step to success. You will be required to write two personal (not ensemble) reflections each semester. What are you reflecting on, are you happy with your performance/music growth, where do you want to be for the next event, what do you need to improve to get there, how are you going to improve? Papers must be at least one page, double spaced. Papers must be turned in no later than 2 weeks after the time of reflection.