

Blue Valley West Jaguar Bands



Band Handbook 2016-2017

Ms. Cheryl Lee - Director of Bands
Mr. Joe Stuever - Assistant Director of Bands

Blue Valley West Band Mission Statement

Formed by the 2016 Leadership Team

**As members of the
Blue Valley West Band,
we value:**

INTEGRITY – building character

FAMILY – unity in pursuit

**PRIDE – fulfillment through
effort**

Directors and Band Staff

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Websites

The BVW Jaguar Bands use two websites for organization and management of the band program.

The first is the band website: www.bvwestband.com

This website contains lots of information about the band program, calendars, fundraising, contact info, pictures, news updates, and more. There is a resources section on the site with many useful documents. There is also a members-only section with access to other documents. The password for this section is: gojags

The second website we use is the Charms system: www.charmsoffice.com

We use Charms to send emails, organize finances and fundraising, submit recordings, and other administrative duties. Most of the time you won't have to worry about Charms. However, should you need to log in, here are instructions:

1. Go to www.charmsoffice.com and click on ENTER/LOGIN, then on PARENTS/STUDENTS
2. Enter our school code: BVWHSBAND
3. You now have access to the basic BVW site with calendar, info, and more.
4. To access your student-specific information (such as fundraising), enter your student BVID on the next page. Once you've logged in using your BVID, it will prompt you to create a new password.

During the school year, you may have playing tests that you can submit via Charms. You can use the assignments tab and recording studio feature to record yourself. There is also a Charms app for iPhone and Android that you can use to access these features.

Courses and Ensembles

Below are the band courses and ensembles available to students in the BVW Jaguar Bands along with a description of each. Some are courses during the school day that may require out-of-school rehearsals, while others are extracurricular ensembles, such as the Competitive Marching Band.

Symphonic Wind Ensemble (SWE)

Course title: Symphonic Marching Band

1st block year-round

The BVW Symphonic Wind Ensemble is the top band at Blue Valley West. Membership is selected through auditions in the late spring of the previous year and chair placements occur during the fall. Membership is highly competitive, and this ensemble performs high-quality band literature for high school and college bands at a very high level. All band students also march in the traditional marching band show at football games.

Symphonic Band

Course title: Concert Band

2nd block year-round

The BVW Symphonic Band is the second band at Blue Valley West. Membership is selected through auditions in the late spring of the previous year and chair placements occur during the fall. This ensemble is focused on developing and refining ensemble and individual musicianship, and it also performs high-quality band literature appropriate for high school bands. All band students also march in the traditional marching band show at football games.

Concert Band

Course title: Concert Band

3rd block year-round

The BVW Concert Band is the third band at Blue Valley West. This ensemble is open to any band student, though membership is determined through audition. This ensemble is focused on developing individual musical ability through fundamental exercises, large ensemble rehearsal, and small ensemble performances. All band students also march in the traditional marching band show at football games.

Jazz Ensemble

4th and 6th blocks year-round

Jazz Ensemble is open to any student interested in learning more about jazz and focusing on developing their skills in improvisation, style, and jazz history. Membership is currently open to all interested students, though auditions may determine which block the student is enrolled in. Jazz Ensemble performs at concerts throughout the school year, as well as at local festivals and events.

Lab Jazz Band

After school – 3-4 PM Tuesdays and Thursdays November – May

Lab Jazz is open to any student who would like to play in a jazz band, but may not be able to fit it into their normal school schedule. Many students in Lab Jazz play secondary instruments. Lab Jazz performs at concerts throughout the school year and a local festival in the spring.

Traditional Marching Band

ALL students enrolled in a band course are part of the Traditional Marching Band. This band performs at all football games during pregame, halftime, and in the stands during the game. They will learn fundamental marching skills during their normal band class as part of a fun, traditional halftime show. No rehearsal is outside of school except for the mass rehearsal before home football games.

Competitive Marching Band

Extracurricular – all rehearsals after school/evenings and some weekends

The Competitive Marching Band is open to all students that want to participate in the full competitive marching band. This group rehearses entirely outside the school day. Regular rehearsals are after school on Mondays and Tuesday and Thursday evenings 5-8 PM. It also requires attendance at band camp before school starts, occasional Friday and Saturday rehearsals, performances at some football games, and travel to competitions in September and October. This group is highly competitive in regional competitions. Membership is determined through auditions in April and May of the previous spring. All members of the Competitive Marching Band must be enrolled in a concert band course to participate.

Color Guard

Symphonic Marching Band (1st block) – Fall only

The Color Guard is the visual component of the Competitive Marching Band and traditional marching band in the fall. They enroll in 1st block Symphonic Marching Band in the fall to get Fine Arts course credit for their participation and rehearse during that class, as well as at the rest of the Competitive Marching Band rehearsals. Membership is determined through auditions the previous spring.

Pep Band

Basketball games December through March (various dates)

Pep Band is an optional opportunity for students who would like to play in the pep band for basketball games. Students will perform at boys and girls varsity games with the possibility of postseason travel.

Winter Guard

November through April

Winter Guard is a special visual ensemble that competes at regional competitions. Membership is selected by audition in November, though any interested student may audition.

Percussion Group

Thursdays 5-8 PM throughout the year (depends on festival/concert schedule)

The Percussion Group is an extra activity open to interested percussionists. It is directed by Calvin Dugan and rehearses some evenings throughout the year (specifics depend on Mr. Dugan and the students'

schedules, as well as festivals). They perform at some concerts at BVW, Regional and State Solo & Ensemble Festivals, the BVW Percussion Festival, and state/national festivals as determined by the directors. This ensemble potentially charges a fee to cover instruction, music, equipment, and travel.

Auditions

All Blue Valley West Band courses require full year participation in the program to join. Students are required to audition for some groups, such as the concert ensembles or Winter Guard. The directors will determine audition requirements, timeline, and results.

As a general rule, music auditions will occur at the end of the school year for the next year's concert ensembles to determine the ensemble roster. Chair placements auditions will occur in the fall for each group after school begins. Auditions for groups such as Winter Guard, Jazz Ensemble, or Drum Line will occur at the beginning or prior to that group's season.

Audition materials (music or visual routines) will be distributed or taught in advance of the auditions. Music material may include etudes, excerpts from solos, scales, and sight reading. Auditions will be scored by the directors or other qualified professionals.

The directors will determine the roster and personnel for each group. They reserve the right to make changes to a roster as they see fit to best serve the ensemble.

BVW Band Boosters

The Blue Valley West Band Boosters is a non-profit organization of parents of band students. There are no membership dues – any parent of a student in the band program is considered a member. The Boosters work to provide support for the band program by way of providing food or snacks, fundraising opportunities, social events, volunteers for numerous events and performances, and chaperones for band trips. All parents of band students are welcome and encouraged to attend Booster meetings.

Calendar and Events

With 170+ students involved in some way in the band program, and as many ensembles as we have, it's very important to stay on top of our calendar! There's nearly always something going on – rehearsals, performances, festivals, trips, etc. We use our Charms organization system as a master calendar for the band program. The calendar can be found on the band website or on our Charms site – see the **Websites** section for more details. There is also a way to sync the Charms calendar to your mobile device – see Mr. Stuever for instructions on this!

We try to plan our events far in advance to give you plenty of notice. We try to always give you at least two weeks' notice of an upcoming event or rehearsal, especially if it's required. Please check your calendar in advance and notify us of any conflicts. There is an Absence Form in the footer of the band website on every page that you can use to notify Ms. Lee and Mr. Stuever of your absence, or you may email us directly. You should alert us to any absences at least one week in advance – and as far in advance as possible in all cases. Please note that absences are not excused unless we confirm them. Here are examples of excused and unexcused absences:

Excused absence:

Family Emergency
Illness (with a doctor's note)
Another school activity if you HAVE worked out a schedule with us in advance

Unexcused absences:

Work
Homework
Another school activity if you HAVEN'T worked out a schedule with us in advance

In most of our ensembles, students are playing their own part or marching their own spot – they are essential, individual members of the program. It's very important that students are at EVERY rehearsal and performance – it is noticeable when they are gone!

We realize that we have great students in the band program, and that many of them are involved in multiple activities. We have band students that are also in choir, debate, forensics, theater, play sports, have jobs, and are excellent academically. That's a lot! Every student is important to us, which means their happiness and involvement in activities is also important to us.

However, we also require a lot of rehearsal time and events outside of school. The best way to ensure that there are no conflicts in regards to schedule is to look far in advance to see what may come up – sports games, concerts, practices, etc. – and let us know in advance how we can accommodate both. We can come up with an individual plan for students to split their time, but we need to know in advance to be able to do this!

The specifics of each ensemble's schedule can be found on our online calendar or in the weekly newsletter.

Student Conduct

Students in the BVW Band Program are to hold themselves and their peers to the highest standards of respect, responsibility, and integrity. They are to always treat others, both in the band program and those not in the band program, with kindness and respect. We do not tolerate harassment of any kind in the band.

All school rules regarding student conduct and discipline are in effect in the BVW Band Program, as well as any additional rules the directors may provide. Student will always know the right thing to do, and should always do it.

Grading

As band is a co-curricular class, students will receive a grade for their preparation, participation, performances, and other assignments. Rehearsals, sectionals, and performances are course requirements that are necessary for high-quality performances. Therefore, unexcused absences or tardies from these events will result in lost points in the student's grade. More severe absences or tardies may result in continued lowering of the grade or removal from an upcoming performance. Please see the **Calendar and Events** section above for more information on excused and unexcused absences.

Each band course has a different weighting system based on the course and what kind of class it is. Possible categories for grading include: performances, assignments, skills tests, daily basics, attendance, album reviews, projects, and more. Please see each course's individual syllabus for more specific information.

Instruments

Personal Instruments

Most students in the band play an instrument that personally belongs to them. This is an advantage for many reasons. Usually these are high-quality, advanced instruments. The consistency of always playing the same instrument helps build strong skills. In terms of maintenance, it's also best to play an instrument that isn't shared. If you would like advice on what kind of instrument to buy, please ask us.

All students with a personal instrument will be provided with a locker to keep it in at school for safety purposes. We highly advise you to have the instrument insured under your homeowner's insurance, as the school will not assume liability for maintenance, repair, or damage of personal instruments.

School-Owned Instruments

Blue Valley West High School furnishes the following instruments for students to use: piccolo, oboe, English Horn, bassoon, bass clarinet, contrabass clarinet, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, French Horn, bass trombone, euphonium, tuba, mellophone, marching baritone, contra, and all percussion instruments. Students will provide their own accessories for these instruments (reeds, mallets, etc.)

These instruments belong to the school and repair costs come from district budgets. We have a limited amount of purchasing and repair power per year for instruments, so we ask that students who use these instruments be extremely careful with them. Students who use a school-owned instrument will be required to sign and return an Instrument Use Contract.

Marching Band

The marching band is a highly visible aspect of the band program which provides performance opportunities for band students and integrates band into school and community activities. As an integral part of the band program, the District's philosophy is that educationally, historically, and musically, marching band is an essential ingredient in a well-rounded music education. The District believes that music students need to develop the ability to participate and perform in different ensemble experiences, which includes marching band.

Participation

Marching band in some capacity is required for all high school students who elect to take the academic band performance courses. All band students are members of the Traditional Marching Band, which performs at all home football games and a local parade.

Performance Procedures

Students are expected to follow the directions of the band staff and chaperones at all times while in a travel or performance setting. Students will conduct themselves as excellent representatives of the band

program and Blue Valley West at all times. In general, while performing or travelling we do everything together: we are in uniform together, sit together, eat together, and act in the same manner.

Forms

Before participating in any band activities, there are several medical, transportation, and liability forms we and the BVW Athletics and Activities Departments must have on file. These will be distributed in the spring and collected/checked at our annual Forms Fest event near the end of May.

Fees and Finances

Many high school co-curricular and extracurricular activities levy fees to cover expenses not covered by the district-provided budget. Program fees for the BVW Band are used to pay for costs associated with supplies, purchasing music, clinicians, and band events.

Fees for the Competitive Marching Band pay for expenses related to: show drill and music design, props, costumes, travel, food, lodging, and competition fees. The BVW Band Boosters budget is set and the amount for these categories is evenly divided among students so that each pays a “Fair Share” to participate in the activity. Fees are kept as low as possible while still providing students with the best possible show and competition experience.

This fee may change from year to year and is set in the spring by the directors and Executive Board. Families sign a financial contract with an attached payment plan for the fee.

Fundraising and Assistance

We provide fundraisers year-round to help families offset the cost of their band fee. Many families utilize these, and some even pay their entire fee through various forms of fundraising. Some are traditional fundraisers selling items or food, while others, such as SCRIP, allow you to receive a percentage of the money you spend on everyday things. Contact the Fundraising Chairs or see the Fundraising Info handout for more information.

100% of all net profits raised during individual student fundraising activities belong to the individual student ledgers. Per IRS regulations, there are no refunds granted from fundraising monies. If a student withdraws from the organization or fails academically, any money earned through fundraisers will remain in the organization’s general fund.

Money in a student’s band ledger will roll over to the next year, and seniors may request a refund of their excess money (paid into the ledger, not from fundraising) at the end of their senior year. In most cases, money paid into the ledger to pay for travel or show expenses cannot be refunded, as it is accounted for in the budget and may have already been spent. Appeals for refunds should be submitted in writing to the Band Booster President.

Financial assistance is available for families who need help meeting required fees and other expenses. Contact the Band Treasurer for information on financial assistance.

Travel and Transportation

Due to the competitive nature of our marching band program and high quality of our concert ensembles, we travel as a band often. Transportation will be provided from BVW to all competition, performance, and festival locations in the form of school buses, school vans, charter buses, or airplanes. Transportation to and from BVW or rehearsal is the responsibility of the individual student.

When traveling as a part of the band program, students must stay with the band until arrival back at school unless special arrangements have been made with the parents before the trip.

Uniforms

Being in band requires several different uniforms or outfits. The point of a uniform is to look the same as the rest of the group. Guidelines for each are below.

Marching Band

The school district provides the following parts of the marching band uniform: pants (bibbers), jacket, shako, plume, and gauntlets. Students must provide their own marching shoes, black socks, black gloves, and black compression gear to be worn underneath the uniform. Marching shoes and black gloves are included in the New Marcher Fee package.

Color Guard and Winter Guard uniforms change from season to season and will be provided as part of the band fee. Each guard member will be individually measured for their uniform.

When wearing the marching band uniform in public, the entire uniform is to be worn – no parts missing, unzipped, or worn improperly. Hair must either be short enough that it doesn't touch the collar or pinned up under the shako. No earrings or other jewelry are to be worn with the uniform.

Uniforms are kept at school on racks in the uniform closet. During band camp, uniforms are fitted and altered to fit each student individually. Uniforms are routinely washed as organized by the Uniform Coordinator – please do not attempt to wash the uniform on your own. Small repairs (replacing buttons, etc.) can be made by the Uniform Coordinator if needed. Students are responsible for replacing any uniform part that is damaged beyond repair or lost.

Concert Band

Concert attire for all students is formal all black – black pants, black shirt, black dress (must hit below the knee), black hose/socks/tights, black shoes, etc. If there is a question about what is appropriate to wear, please ask beforehand.

2016-2017 Blue Valley West Band Handbook Acknowledgement Form

This Handbook is provided for your information. We hope it will make your Blue Valley West Band experience as beneficial as possible. Please read the handbook and sign the following acknowledgement form and return it by Friday, August 19th.

I have received and read the 2016-2017 Band Handbook, and I understand how it applies to me.

Student Name (printed): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

I have received and read the 2016-2017 Band Handbook, and I understand how it applies to my student.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____