

THE FITCH MARCHING BAND

ATTENDANCE POLICY

During the past few years, we have been having difficulty with the student's attendance which is REQUIRED band performances and rehearsals. The attendance policy has been revised and a grading policy is back in effect regarding attendance. Students and parents need to understand the importance of this. If your child has decided to be in the Austintown Fitch Band program, they are required to be at all rehearsals and performances. This year we have 10 football games, 3 band nights, and the Canfield Fair performance, and other community performances. (*This is considered a light schedule for a program of our magnitude*) There is also the possibility of playoff games in November. The performance schedule is handed out to each student prior to the end of the previous school year so there is NO question as to the dates and times of the performances.

The Fitch Band is a very active organization with many responsibilities for school and community performances. Thus it becomes the responsibility of every band member to help the Band fulfill its obligations. Membership in the Fitch Band is **VOLUNTARY**, but once membership is established, it becomes **COMPULSORY** to follow the guidelines set up for the group. Membership is demanding, but the benefits of membership far outweigh the disadvantages. The success of the Band is dependent upon its members understanding, accepting, and prioritizing the attendance requirements.

4th OF JULY: This parade is a major part of the community and has been an Austintown tradition for years. Although not mandatory, it is understood that if you are in town for the 4th of July that you can attend rehearsals and march the parade. Please keep in mind that this is when we teach the incoming freshman all of our fundamentals of marching, review the fundamentals with everybody, and review music for the month of August. It is a lot more than just showing up and reviewing #1 through #4 for the parade. If you are out of town for the 4th of July, you can still attend the band rehearsals, learn the fundamentals, and get the music to practice for August.

Please read the attached letter regarding Band Camp. Band Camp is held during the first week of summer band rehearsals that begins at the end of July/beginning of August. These are "two-a-day" sessions that begin at 8:55 am and will end at 3:00 pm, with frequent water breaks and a lunch break. Lunch is provided by the schools food services. Students are REQUIRED to purchase flip folders and marching lyres. Music stores will carry these. Band Camp is NOT an option and the attendance policy will be in effect. Students need to arrange their work and personal schedules in order to attend Band Camp.

The first thing that band members and their parents must know is that all rehearsals and performances are mandatory. We are doing a disservice to everyone when we allow the idea of "Band at your Convenience." Likewise, students must not be late to any rehearsal or performance. Each member will be given a calendar of band functions. The times indicated are when attendance begins and everyone needs to be ready to begin (outside or inside). If you are just leaving your house, pulling into the parking lot, or walking in the door, you will be late!

*If you are "Early" then you are ON TIME
If you are "On Time", then you are LATE
If you are late, then you are in TROUBLE!*

Any changes to the calendar will be given to the students with as much advance notice as possible. In case of a conflict, students must submit an **ERF** to the Band Director as soon as possible but **at least two weeks** before the date in question. The excuse must be as detailed as possible and presented in a professional manner. Stating the fact that a student will miss a performance is not good enough. Using sarcasm or indicating what you don't like will result in it being thrown away and considered an unexcused absence. Please be aware that even though it was submitted on time, does not mean that it will be excused. Please be aware that no matter what the excuse is, if it was not turned in before the deadline, then it will be considered an unexcused absence.

In case of an emergency, parents should call the band office phone: 330-797-3900 ext. 1026, or e-mail: aust_wso@access-k12.org as soon as possible. Even in the case of an emergency, an **ERF** must still be submitted upon returning to school or no later than two school days after the absence so as to provide the Band Director with an explanation of the emergency or illness. "I just found out that I am in a wedding (or anything)" is not an emergency. If no excuse form is submitted within two school days after the absence, it will be considered unexcused.

The Band Director decides whether the request is excusable or not. Absences will have an effect on a student's Band grade based on the following guidelines:

**When ERF is indicated, this means the Excuse Request Form. Call or email for emergencies. NO TEXTS PLEASE!*

GRADING

Grades will be calculated based on the following criteria: Performances, Daily Participation, Playing/Written Assignments, and Summer Band Participation. The Austintown Schools grading scale will be used for Marching Band and throughout the school year.

A	100-90
B	89-80
C	79-70
D	69-60
F	59-0

PERFORMANCES . . . ALL PERFORMANCES ARE MANDATORY!

EXCUSED ABSENCE or TARDINESS	No effect on grade if work is made up*
UNEXCUSED ABSENCE FOR PERFORMANCE.....	One letter grade lower for the grade period
MISSED "BEFORE GAME" REHEARSAL.....	5% of 9 weeks grade
LATE TO "BEFORE GAME" REHEARSAL.....	1 Warning
	2 2 nd Warning
	3 2% of 9 weeks grade
	4 Additional 2%

In addition, continuous unexcused absences/tardies will result in a Denial of Participation in the Fitch Band Program.

DAILY PARTICIPATION: Each student will be awarded 100 daily participation points. This includes summer band practices, rehearsals, and performances. It is the student's responsibility to maintain his/her points. Points will be deducted (or added) on a weekly basis. Demerits will be given and points deducted from each student's daily participation grade. **Infractions may include but not be limited to:** Tardiness, disrupting rehearsal, no instrument, no music, instrument in poor condition, improper equipment, chewing gum food/drink in band room, damaging school equipment, rude behavior, being removed from class, no equipment and/or supplies (including pencils). Consistent infractions will result in a Denial of Participation and removal from the Fitch Band Program.

PLAYING/WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: These will be announced and assigned within the grading period. Playing tests can be given at any random time by the Directors. Students will be able to do an extra playing/written assignment to make up an excused absence from a performance or rehearsal.

SUMMER BAND PARTICIPATION: Each student will be awarded 100 points for summer band practices.

- 2.5 points deducted for excused absences, if the work is NOT made up
- 5 points deducted for unexcused absences.

THE FOLLOWING ARE CASE EXAMPLES OF DETERMINING EXCUSED OR UNEXCUSED

SICKNESS OF STUDENT: Please call (number and email above). Upon returning to school, the student must submit ERF to the Band Director at least two days after the absence. The same goes if there is a sickness in the family and the student is needed at home. If the student is absent from school on the day of a performance, they can still do the performance. If the student is absent from school and is too sick to make the performance, please call or email the band office as to let the Director know that he/she is not able to be at the performance.

INJURY: If a student has an injury and is unable to march, then the Director must have an ERF from a doctor stating for how long they advise not to march. If the student is able, they are to still attend the game, sit and play with the band in the stands, and stand or sit on the sidelines during the band performance. If the student is not able, then they are to be at home and not at the game with their friends or family.

EMERGENCY: Emergency situations are understood, (sickness, family emergency, etc.) The Band Director must be notified ASAP. Follow the guidelines above. Again, "I just found out . . ." is not an emergency. Last minute/spur of the moment social functions is NOT an emergency. They will not be excused.

FAMILY OBLIGATIONS: Pre-planned weddings or wedding rehearsals are considered excused. Family vacations where the student will be out of town (WITH PARENTS) for the entire weekend are considered excused. Having dinner with the family, birthday parties, last minute/spur of the moment social functions will NOT be excused. Having to get up early the next day for a family, church, or social function is NOT excused.

WORK: Absolutely Not!

ATHLETICS: We can work around athletic conflicts (practices and scheduled matches). **Students are excused for athletic events ONLY if the event is at the same exact time as the performance.** Many scheduled events usually finish in time to give the student enough time to make a performance. They need to make arrangements (ride, uniform, and instrument) to get to the performance. We encounter this at Band Night performances. The Fitch Band usually goes on near the end of a band night performance, thus giving time for athletes to make the performance. Varsity football players obviously cannot be written into a pregame show or halftime show, but are required to attend parades and band nights. Freshman football players are to be with the band for all games and NOT with the football team collecting footballs during the game. **Social functions dealing with athletics will not be excused at any time. Missing a performance due to having to get up early the next day will NOT be excused.**

OTHER GROUPS: Students who are involved in Cheer Leading, Cadets, and Dance Line can still be in the band. They will be with their respective groups during the game and march with the band during halftime (and pregame if possible). They have the option of wearing their respective uniform or change into the band uniform. It is the individual's responsibility to make sure their instrument is taken care of. Students involved with Homecoming are excused for pre-game. However, they can still march with the Band for halftime. They have the option of wearing their homecoming clothes for the performance or changing into their band uniform. Please remember that if a band student is on the homecoming court, this does not excuse them from following the rules. Any other groups (school or social) that cause a student to miss a performance will NOT be excused.

LEAVING THE GAME EARLY: Students who have athletic events or ACT tests on Saturday may be excused, (if desired), with their parents after halftime of an **away game**. An ERF must be given to the Band Director. They will only be excused with THEIR PARENT(s). Transportation arrangements must be made by the student and parent. If a small group of students are to leave with a parent, then the Director must have an ERF from all parents of the students involved. Students will be permitted to leave with their parent(s) after an away game ONLY if they are NOT returning to Austintown but going elsewhere instead. Again, an ERF must be given to the Band Director. Absolutely no one will be excused after halftime of a home game. A student who gets ill at any game can be excused with THEIR PARENT at any time during that game.

INEXCUSABLE EXCUSES:

“I couldn't get a ride” There are a lot students in the band, there has to be at least one person who will give you a ride.

Last minute social functions: Absolutely not! Instead of you staying at home to see your family, why can't they come see you perform with the band? I bet they would enjoy that more.

“I didn't know” Yes you did! You just didn't read this.

“But I have been to all other performances” Think about it, if you fail a test in a class, what will it do to your grade?

If any band student (excused or not) is seen at a performance and NOT with the band will result in a Denial of Participation and will need to get their schedule changed.

***MAKE UP WORK:** Missed performances for **excused absences only** must be made up. You can either play all of their show music for the Band Director, or play in a pep band performance, or will be given a written assignment. All make up work must be done by WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 31st. If makeup work is not done, it will result in an unexcused absence and a lowered letter grade for the first nine weeks. It is the student's responsibility to arrange for make-up work with the Directors. Unexcused absence will not be made up.

PEP BAND: Many times the Fitch Band gets called to perform at the last minute. We cannot and will not make such performances mandatory. Pep Bands are done on a volunteer basis, but also helps highlight one's dedication to the band and the community. They can also be used for hours for the NHS.

***It would take too much time and space to review every possible scenario for missing a practice or performance. Other cases will be dealt with on a “one-by-one” basis and will either be excused or non-excused at the discretion of the Band Directors.**

Please be aware that it is not unfair for students and parents to adhere to this policy. Please be aware that it is possible to arrive on the first day of school with a “B” average in Band due to missed rehearsals or loss of daily participation points. This is not to be used as a weapon against you, but as a friendly warning of our standards and for each student to meet our expectations.

Although this is a bold stance on the part of the directors, it is necessary in order to maintain and raise the high standards of band membership thus increasing the quality and success of the Austintown Fitch Band. To preserve the quality of performance, the morale of the entire group, and the dignity and integrity of the educational values, full attendance must be expected.

**Wesley O'Connor
Band Director**

**Marc Pupino
Band Director**

**Doug McGlynn
Head Principal**