

Woodson Marching Cavaliers

Band Camp “Do’s and Don’t” and Other Info

What is marching band camp? Why is it important?

Marching band camp, or just band camp for short, is a series of rehearsal days we have before the school year begins. These rehearsals develop the skills and content that are largely not present in the regular school day instruction. These skills include marching, rehearsal techniques specific to marching band, choreography, and of course the music we perform.

Marching band music is never performed or practiced in class, so the entirety of what we do is done during band camp or after school. This makes these rehearsals before school begins critical to success. Each day of camp represents about one full week of rehearsal once the school year begins, so attendance is crucial.

The shorter answer is, band camp is where we learn how to be a band and begin to learn our show. It is a lot of work, a lot of hours, but also a lot of fun.

Heat Protocol

The band follows all FCPS safety regulations, including guidance that refers to heat. These include constant communication with athletic trainers, who have special devices called “Wet Bulb Globe Temperature” readers. These calculate the temperature, humidity, cloud cover, wind speed, and several other things to give a composite number that indicates the appropriate level of action outdoors. We are outside a lot, and the trainers are constantly updating me on the local readings here at Woodson. We typically take water breaks every 15 minutes, with a longer break each hour for sunscreen reapplication. If readings are high enough, we may stop using equipment, or go inside. We take GREAT care of all of our students and their health and safety is our number one priority. Heat exhaustion takes days to fully recover from, and we don’t want any students to miss any more of camp than is absolutely necessary.

How do I prepare for camp?

Go outside. The toughest part of marching band for most people is dealing with the heat. Going outside before camp is the easiest way to acclimate and make sure you aren’t miserable for the first few days. The body and

mind do eventually adjust to the heat, so even if the first few days are pretty tough to handle, it will improve. Here is a hitlist of ways to prepare:

- **DO** go outside for extended periods of time each day to acclimate to the heat.
- **DO** cut back on dairy consumption before going into the heat, **NO MILK!**
- **DO** eliminate soda from your diet, at least for camp.
- **DO** eliminate high caffeine drinks as well as this can dehydrate you.
- **ALWAYS** eat breakfast before camp; most students who feel sick in the morning do not eat breakfast (but don't eat too much)
- **DO** drink water. Lots of it. Start today. You hydrate for the next day, so don't wait until we've already started to drink lots of water. Most ailments at camp can be solved by good hydration. This becomes really important as camp goes on and the hours outside start to add up.
- **DO** stretch when you wake up and before you go to sleep. If this does not sufficiently reduce soreness, consider taking a baby aspirin to reduce inflammation. Of course, hydration will also restore muscles more quickly.
- **DO** drink a Gatorade or other sports drink with electrolytes when you get home. We don't like to drink those during the day to prevent sugars from ruining the instruments, but once home use the "off time" to replenish some of the things your body lost during the day.
- **DON'T** skip meals. All three meals are important. You will burn many more calories than you would in a typical day, so staying ahead of this is important. Students pack lunch, so it's very important to pack a balanced meal, especially one that is not based around added sugars. The heat and your hydration will not treat your poor eating choices kindly!
- **DON'T** stay up late. Sleep is an important part of recovery. As we all reunite with our old friends and make new ones, please don't stay up late talking, texting, etc with them until 2am.
- **DO** complete the OTC form if it is outstanding so that we can treat any minor aches and pains at camp.

- **DO** purchase at a minimum ONE-HALF GALLON insulated water cooler. Clear bottles heat up the water when we are outside, smaller portions will require constant refilling and waste rehearsal time. As tempting as it is, please go easy on putting ice into the coolers. Very cold water can actually cause muscle cramping, especially when it's very hot outside – which it will be.
- **DON'T** wear long pants. You will be sent home to change. Wear light colored clothing that breathes well. Do not wear layers. SPF clothing is encouraged!
- **DON'T** wear flip-flops, crocs, sandals, Sperry's or other "light" footwear; you will be sent home to get more accommodating footwear. Wear tennis shoes/sneakers that have laces and ankle support that are in good condition. We spend a LOT of time on our feet, so good footwear is worth some level of investment.
- **DO** protect your face, eyes, and lips. Wear sunscreen, a hat, and wear sunglasses. Brass players are recommended to wear DCT or other lip care that does NOT contain Camphor (an acidic compound that will make it worse!).

Things to Bring

- Bookbag (separate from your school bookbag; doesn't need to be as big)
- 1" Binder and around 30 sheet protectors for music, warm ups, etc.
- Pencils for marking music, completing dot books
- Lyre for holding pep tunes (we provide the flip folder)
- Spiral bound 3"X5" index cards (for everyone but pit percussion)
- 1 Gallon insulated water jug
- 1 plastic garbage bag (to cover your bag if it rains)
- 1 Small "fanny pack" to store your dotbook, breathing tube, pencil, etc.
- Sunscreen, SPF 35 or greater.
- Hat that will provide shade for your face (sun-burned lips are painful!)
- Sunglasses (optional but recommended)
- Your Music! (we will only have limited copies)