

# SECAUCUS HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND

## The Complete Reference

### **Version 3.5**

Based on *Attendance, Uniform and Behavior Policies* by Thomas Tufaro and Robert Fournier - February 2003

Portions adapted from Fairborn High School Band Handbook (<http://www.fairbornband.org>), and Eastern York (Pa.) Marching Band Manual (<http://www.easternyork.com/>)

This is not a legal document.

District policy supersedes this document in all instances. The staff reserves the right to add or alter these policies at any time.



## Definitions

All references to *Marching Band* or *the band* refer to all facets of the band — Color Guard, Dance Team, Drumline, Pit Percussion, and band proper. This distinction is not limited to this document.

The *marching season* includes the time from the start of band camp to the end of the football season, including all playoff games. Typically, this is from the end of August to the end of November. However, the band is often called upon for performances, i.e. parades and other special occasions, year-round.

The term *parent* refers to any parent or legal guardian.

## Tradition and Philosophy

The Secaucus High School Marching Band (SHSMB) provides educational opportunities for its members in the performing arts. All activities take place in an atmosphere that promotes social and artistic development through creative and innovative programming. We believe the journey is more important than the destination, placing emphasis on growth of the individual, not specific performances.

---

**Our goal is to have a good time, working as a team, to make good music.**

---

The public forms their opinion of the band based on our appearance and actions. We represent Secaucus High School and Middle School, the Secaucus school system, the town of Secaucus, Hudson County, the State of New Jersey, and everyone who has ever worn a Patriot Marching Band uniform, whenever we perform or are in public.

Members should project a positive mental attitude as well as a respect for the band staff, the uniform, and the organization as a whole.

We treat band members as adults until proven otherwise.

---

**The total band member is someone who always will give his or her best for the good of the band.**

---

The band follows all Middle School, High School, and district policies, which supersede this document.

## Band Staff

Paid professionals, assistants, and volunteer alumni are a vital part of the band program. Members should give the staff the same respect they would give any member of the school faculty. Bring problems directly to the band director; do not confront a staff member directly. See *Conflict with Staff Member*.

## Director Contact Information

In the event of lateness or absence, or for any questions, contact the director, Ed Marsh, at the following:

- Cell phone: 201-906-1029
- Email: [director@shsmb.org](mailto:director@shsmb.org)
- AOL Instant Messenger (AIM): hamonwry12

## Band Web Site

The official band web site is <http://www.shsmb.org>. All information is up on the site first, including all important dates. Please check the site weekly for any updated information.

The band maintains an email and birthday database. To protect our members, the webmaster hides the year of birth from website users. If there is an objection to having this information on the site, please inform the director or webmaster.

## Email Communications

The band staff attempts to communicate information as completely as possible. The easiest way to quickly get information to a large group of people is through email. Please check email at least once a week during marching season.

Because email from the band contains important information, it is imperative that members and parents inform the director or webmaster of any email address changes.

## Band Parents Association

The Secaucus High School Marching Band Parents Association (BPA) works hand-in-hand with the school administration, band, and band staff. The band simply would not operate without the BPA's support. However, the BPA Executive Board does not affect the staff's policies. Conversely, the director and band staff do not sit on the Executive Board, nor dictate the policy and operations of the BPA. See the BPA Bylaws at <http://www.shsmb.org/parents/bylaws2006.pdf> for complete information.

## Student Accounts

The BPA establishes individual accounts for each member. Members may use money raised to pay for band camp, trips, band shoes, or any other items deemed appropriate by the director. All remaining money left in each member's account at the end of the school year automatically rolls over to the next school year. If there is any money remaining in a member's account at the end of their senior year, a parent or guardian may request the money transferred to family members in the band. See the BPA Bylaws at <http://www.shsmb.org/parents/bylaws2006.pdf> for information on member funds.

## Fundraising

The marching band incurs costs over the course of the year to participate in such activities as band camp and sleep-away trips, as well as essentials such as band shoes and annual t-shirts.

The Band Parents Association schedules fundraising events throughout the year to help members offset costs. Those who need to make special arrangements can speak with the director on a confidential basis. The SHSMB does not deny membership due to financial hardship as long as members take steps to fulfill the obligation.

## Medical Information

All members *must* have a physical examination by either the school doctor or private physician. Any member without a completed physical form on record with the school nurse cannot practice or perform in *any* band activity. Please make the director and staff aware of any illnesses, allergies, or chronic ailments.

## Photo Identification

At the beginning of the season, the band collects emergency information from each member, and takes a photo for a band ID card, used for attendance and emergency situations. During the season, members will receive the card when they arrive for a performance or off-campus event. Band staff or band parents will collect the card before boarding buses for attendance and safety purposes.

## Instruments and Equipment

All equipment must be properly stored when not in use. You must properly clean and maintain your instrument for optimum performance; this is not the staff's responsibility. The equipment truck transports percussion, large instruments, color guard, and dance team equipment for performances. Smaller instruments, such as trumpets, flutes, clarinets, and alto saxophones must stay with band members on buses.

Snare, tenor, and bass drummers are responsible for purchasing and maintaining sticks and mallets as directed by the percussion instructor. Percussionists must purchase white electrical tape and tape all sticks and mallets.

Wind players are responsible for purchasing their own slide oil, reeds, and other maintenance items.

---

**The band does not supply reeds or mouthpieces.**

---

Percussionists are responsible for the transportation of the drumline's equipment *only*. Members are responsible for the transportation of their instruments; do not rely on the drumline to ensure your instrument is packed.

## Attendance

Absenteeism affects everyone. To produce a quality band, members must attend *all* functions. We give members and parents a schedule of rehearsals and performances before the season begins. Please make every effort to avoid scheduling appointments that conflict with rehearsals or performances. See *Rehearsal Schedule*.

To have productive rehearsals and successful performances, band members must be at *every* function. This also ensures that parents know where their child is at all times. Members must confirm all absences, whether excused or unexcused, with a note to the director due by the next band function.

Infraction	Consequence
One Unexcused Absence	Warning.
Two Unexcused Absences	Meeting with staff. Parents notified.
Three Unexcused Absences	Mandatory meeting with parent. Possible suspension from performances.
Four Unexcused Absences	Mandatory meeting with parent. Possible dismissal from the band.

Members must give a note to the director or a staff member at least three days prior to the absence if there is a valid reason for missing a rehearsal or performance.

Excusable absences are:

- Sick, out of school
- Death in the family
- Important family engagement (wedding, vacation/trip)
- Religious holidays.

Unexcused absences are:

- Doctor/Dentist/Orthodontist appointment (unless an emergency)
- Driver's license test
- Extra-curricular school functions, such as dances
- Homework — You must learn to manage you time well. If you need time to complete your work, contact the director to work something out.
- Attending a sporting event
- Birthday
- Work
- Trips without two weeks notice
- Didn't have a ride.

The director gives all members his phone number, email address, and AIM instant messenger address (see *Director Contact Info*). There is no excuse for not contacting the director in case of lateness or absence.

A member of the staff confirms every lateness or absence the day after the absence.

## Early Dismissal

Any member that needs to leave an event before the band, or travel in a vehicle other than the band bus, must have a signed note from a parent. The note must include the name and relationship of the person responsible for the member. For safety reasons, verbal consent is not acceptable.

## Lateness

A member is late when arriving after the designated report time. Please allow sufficient time before the start of rehearsal to set up equipment and get to the rehearsal area.

A signed note from a parent or guardian *must* accompany the late member.

<b>Infraction</b>	<b>Consequence</b>
One Unexcused Late	Warning.
Two Unexcused Lates	Meeting with staff. Parents notified.
Three Unexcused Lates	Mandatory meeting with parent. Possible suspension from performances.
Four Unexcused Lates	Mandatory meeting with parent. Possible dismissal from the band.

## In- or Out-of-School Suspensions

District policy dictates that members who are suspended in-school or out-of-school from the regular school day may not attend rehearsals or performances on those days. Furthermore, if a member is suspended on a Friday and into the following week, members cannot attend that weekend's rehearsals or performance(s).

## Rehearsals

Members should allow 15-20 minutes before the scheduled rehearsal time to set up equipment and walk to the rehearsal site. See *Lateness*. Members must bring to every rehearsal:

- Drill books
- Music
- Instruments
- All miscellaneous equipment
- Water *only*; no soda or juice.

Drum majors *must* ensure the podium is at the rehearsal area before the start of rehearsal.

## Rehearsal Schedule

The band rehearses every Tuesday and Thursday night from 6:29-8:45 p.m. The drumline, color guard, and dance team may have additional rehearsals at the discretion of the respective instructor. Members of these sections cannot be excused or excluded from these rehearsals unless agreed upon by the respective instructor.

## Rehearsal Dress

Marching band is a sport. Since marching band runs from late summer into late autumn, the weather changes drastically. Like all sports, improper dress can lead to injuries. Dress for practicality, not to impress. The SHSMB does not supply wet or cold weather gear.

Members must bring:

- Clothes that allow for comfort and movement in all weather
- A hat that covers the head
- Properly fitted and tied sneakers with socks
- A shirt that covers the midriff
- Appropriately rated sunscreen
- Layered clothing when appropriate, e.g. t-shirt, thermal layer, sweatshirt and/or jacket during cold weather.

Members must avoid:

- Footwear not designed for athletics (e.g. sandals, boots, flip-flops)
- Decorative chains, such as wallet chains
- Clothing that exposes the midriff
- Shorts that rise above the mid-thigh
- Clothing inappropriate for the weather (e.g. shorts in November).

If the staff determines a member is dressed inappropriately, that member will be sent home and marked absent.

## Football Games

The band supports the football team by playing and cheering in the stands and working in conjunction with the cheerleaders. Report time is announced before each game and on the band website.

- All percussion, color guard, dance team, and large instruments need to be ready for load at the designated time.
- Members receive stand music at the beginning of the season. It is your responsibility to have this music with you at all games. *All* members will play in the stands. A 5-cent replacement fee will be charged for each page of music lost or not returned in acceptable condition.
- Take cases and raincoats to the performance location when there is a threat of rain.
- No member can leave early without a note from a parent or guardian. You *must* be excused by the director or a staff member.
- Inappropriate cheers are not allowed.
- The band will march to and from all games. Once we have returned to the high school, form into parade block and wait for announcements and dismissal.

## Competitions and Festivals

Competitions, festivals, and other adjudicated activities are important facets of the band program. Through these activities, we obtain valuable feedback about our progress as individuals and as a band. Although we never “live or die” by any judge’s opinion of our performance, it is important that we learn the value of giving maximum effort and standing by the results as our best possible effort of the day.

Because of the amount of time, work, and discipline required to produce performances, the band develops great camaraderie. We share hardship, discomfort, fatigue, oppressive heat, cold, long bus rides, disappointment, tears, success, and joy. Members must channel energy and attention toward the goal of performance excellence and the ultimate success that follows.

The band graciously accepts the results, regardless of outcome. We will always show appreciation and respect for the performance of others.

The band’s image is based on each individual. Our public reputation is based upon our appearance, our actions, and our projection of pride. It is the responsibility of each band member to present our best image at all times.

---

**Whether or not we are in a competitive situation, we are here to perform to the best of our ability. You won’t remember scores after you graduate high school.**

---

## Uniform and Grooming

The uniform dictates a marching band’s appearance. Each member receives:

- An “Aussie” hat with carrying box
- One lightweight jacket and pants — also known as the “informal” uniform

- One “traditional” uniform jacket and pants — also known as the “formal” uniform
- Other items such as sashes, gloves, or citation cords.

Note that not all sections may receive gloves or other accessories. Members must report ill-fitting items immediately.

---

**Do not cut any part of the uniform to make alterations.**

---

Uniforms must return clean at the end of the season; no one may keep their uniforms over the summer. Members must clean their uniforms when necessary throughout the season, keeping them free of stains and dirt and in a garment bag when not in use, in accordance with the uniform contract handed out before receiving the uniform. When in uniform, members can consume only food and drink approved by the staff. See *Approved Food in Uniform*.

## Band Shoes

All members must buy black marching shoes before the season begins. No other shoes are permitted. The Band Parents Association takes orders during band camp.

Color guard and dance team members must purchase their shoes as directed by their instructor.

## Uniform Inspection and Maintenance

Before each performance, the Uniform Inspection Committee, consisting of Band Council, staff, and band parents, inspects each member’s uniform for cleanliness and maintenance. Members who fail inspection will not perform unless they correct the infraction.

Item	Maintenance
Hat	Keep in the carrying box when not in use. Report damaged and improperly fitting hats immediately. Hats must be returned after each performance; <i>do not</i> take hats home.
Uniform Jacket	Keep in garment bag when not in use. Hang on a wooden hanger if possible. Clean and press periodically. It is the member’s responsibility to have all buttons, zippers, snaps, and hems properly attached.
Uniform Pants	Keep hemmed and properly fitted. Pants must sit above the waist. Cuffs must not drag on the ground. Hang on a wooden hanger if possible.
Shoes	Each member must have a pair of approved marching shoes; see <i>Band Shoes</i> . Keep in a separate bag or box and polish when scuffed.
Miscellaneous Parts	Must be properly worn with the uniform and kept free from stains.

## Other Clothing

Undershirt	Members must wear the band t-shirt or white undershirt, sweatshirt, or turtleneck under the uniform jacket at all times.
------------	--

Pants/Shorts	Pants, shorts, or thermal underwear may be worn under the uniform pants, but cannot be visible.
Socks	Each member must wear <i>black</i> socks that rise above the ankle. White socks are unacceptable.

## Performance Dress

Members are free to express themselves through hair coloring or piercings. However, to create a consistent appearance for performances, members must adhere to the following:

Hair and Nails	Members must braid long hair, and place it entirely beneath the hat. Nail polish not hidden by gloves must be neutral.
Jewelry	Earrings, facial piercings, and necklaces that show outside of the uniform jacket's collar, rings, watches, bracelets, etc. are not permitted in uniform. Leave these items at home to minimize the possibility of loss.
Makeup	Color guard and dance team members will be instructed how to wear their makeup and hair. Other members must not wear makeup for performances.

Members must wear the fully zipped uniform before or after performances, except hat and gloves. At the staff's discretion, members may wear alternate clothing, such as a band t-shirt or other designated shirt. If a member does not have appropriate clothing, they must wear the uniform in its entirety.

---

**Members must wear the uniform neatly, correctly, and with pride at all times.**

---

## Approved Food in Uniform

Only the following approved food and drink are allowed in uniform:

- Water *only*
- Hot dogs with no condiments
- Fruit
- Vegetables
- Trail mix
- Any non-marking, non-greasy snack.

Members cannot eat these items even when removing the uniform jacket, as the possibility of staining the uniform pants exists. Eat out of uniform before events or at the designated time.

The following are not allowed under any circumstances:

- Nachos
- Any condiments, such as ketchup, mustard, or cheese sauce
- Soda, iced tea, lemonade
- Hot Chocolate
- Candy

- Potato chips
- Hamburgers or cheeseburgers
- Any greasy or oily food
- French Fries.

## General Conduct, Safety, and Member Behavior

It is important that members conduct themselves with the utmost dignity. Members must respect *all* band members, staff, and band parents, as well as other groups, coaches, referees, judges, parents, and instructors. When with the marching band, members are under the jurisdiction of district policies, as well as those of any sanctioning body such as the BCSL or USSBA.

We do not permit these behaviors, in or out of uniform:

- Smoking, drinking, or illicit drug use
- Poor sportsmanship
- Hazing
- Cursing, swearing, or the use of inappropriate language
- The action, implication, or threat of physical and/or verbal abuse
- Fighting
- Theft
- Traveling separately from the band before or after a performance without a note from a parent or guardian
- Arriving late without written notification.

---

**Offenders will not perform at that day's events and will be punished in accordance with district policy upon return.**

---

Members must not leave uniforms, hats, shoes, sashes, gloves, or citation cords on floors or chairs. If you are not wearing your uniform, it should be on a hanger and the accessories in a bag with your name on it.

Every member is responsible for leaving every area neat and clean. Do not leave leftover food, paper or plastic bags and drink bottles on floors, chairs, or countertops.

Recycle when possible. Section leaders are responsible for keeping all areas clean.

## Hazing

Hazing, such as the initiation of new members or late night pranks, is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. See the official Secaucus High School Handbook for the school policy on hazing. Any member found guilty of hazing will be immediately removed from the band.

## Traveling Behavior

The band travels frequently during the year. All district, school, and band rules are in effect for the duration of the trip.

The staff distributes an itinerary for overnight trips, including band camp.

- Members must behave at all times.
- Unauthorized visitors are not allowed.
- Parents and members are responsible for any property damage and lost keys.
- Lock rooms at all times.
- Doors must be fully open when male and female members are socializing.
- Members are responsible for providing funds for their own meals unless stated otherwise.
- Be courteous in dining facilities. Other groups use these facilities as well. Do not take food, glasses, dishes, signs, or other “souvenirs” from dining facilities.
- Do not play instruments in the rooms.
- No one can leave the premises without permission from the director.
- Members will always ride the bus to and from events.
- Follow all instructions of the staff and chaperones. If you don’t understand, ask.

The director may dismiss and send home any member, at their parents’ expense, that disobeys the rules and whose general conduct and attitude towards the trip and its participants is detrimental to the band.

## Bus Behavior

- Hand your ID card to the staff member or designated chaperone as soon as you board the bus.
- Chaperones check each bus before loading and relay any problems to the director and driver.
- Treat bus drivers with respect. Different drivers have different standards; adhere to their rules.
- To avoid problems, close all school bus windows as we enter or leave another school campus.
- Members must ride in the same bus for the duration of the trip. *Do not change buses!*
- Chaperones may reassign seats if they deem it necessary; members may also be assigned to a different bus at the director or staff’s discretion.
- Attendance will be taken before the bus moves, and after every stop when everyone gets off.
- Nothing should ever protrude out of the bus windows (heads, arms, instruments, etc.) nor should any item ever be thrown or dropped out of a window.
- Normal conversation is appropriate; shouting or screaming is not. Singing may or may not be OK depending on the driver, content, and musicality.
- Do not change out of uniform unless instructed to do so by the band staff.
- Do not initiate or participate in activities that may distract the driver.
- Do not take flash photos. It distracts the driver and causes a safety issue.
- Do not play instruments while on the bus.
- All instrument cases must stay on the bus unless instructed otherwise by the director.

- Do not stand while the bus is in motion.
- Keep the bus clean at all times. At the end of a trip, each bus is inspected. Members may not leave until the bus is cleaned to the bus driver's satisfaction.
- Be courteous and thank the drivers and chaperones when we return.

## Student Leadership

The director and staff select leaders based on musical and marching ability, length of service, dedication, loyalty, and leadership qualities. The number of leaders will vary from section to section and year to year. Potential leaders must write an essay explaining their interest and qualifications for a leadership position. While members may apply for a specific position, the staff ultimately chooses who they feel is the best member(s) for each leadership role.

Leaders may be called on to accept awards, appear in photographs or special presentations, etc. on behalf of the band. When receiving awards, these members will take the field for retreat:

- Drum Major(s)
- Color Guard Captain(s)
- Dance Team Captain(s)
- Band President
- Percussion Captain(s).

## Drum Majors

Drum Majors are responsible for the execution of rehearsals and performances. They are both field commanders and field conductors, and it is their responsibility to maintain discipline and order on the field. The Drum Major is the highest-ranking student in the organization and the primary student representative.

Drum majors must have a thorough understanding of the music and drill for each show, and be able to assist those who need help.

### Drum Major Qualifications

To be a Drum Major, members must have:

- A minimum of three years as a regular member of the band
- A working knowledge of correct conducting and teaching techniques and methods, including score reading
- An understanding of the physical and mental demands of the brass, woodwinds, percussion, color guard, and dance team
- Superior marching technique and style
- Ability to read and teach drill charts and marching style
- A willingness to be present at every band function
- Superior leadership skills, including pleasant manner and conduct.

## **Drum Major Duties**

Drum Majors must:

- Direct the band to the rehearsal area, into the proper formation and ready to begin rehearsal
- Take the podium to and from all functions
- Take the band through warm-up exercises
- Lead the band through practice runs
- Help rehearsals run smoothly and productively
- Lead the band in performance
- Add to the overall showmanship of the band with their performance as drum major
- Set the standard for discipline and conduct for the members of the band to follow
- Assist in teaching music and marching to other members of the band.

## **Characteristics of a Successful Drum Major**

Effective drum majors:

- Are dedicated to the band and its success
- Are highly responsible and reliable
- Work well with the director, staff, and members
- Know how to teach and assist other members of the band
- Have a good understanding of music
- Are skilled as a field conductor
- Have exceptional marching technique
- Are loud and easily understood
- Inspire the band in performance.

## **Assistant Drum Majors, Section Leaders and Captains**

All member leaders carry out the policies of the band, school, and administration to the best of their abilities. Member leaders should be positive and work in the best interest of the Secaucus High School Marching Band at all times.

Members must avoid confrontation with member leaders. If you question or disagree with specific instructions; discuss the problem with the Band President, Drum Major, or ultimately, the director before or after rehearsal. Do not disrupt the rehearsal. See *Conflict Resolution*.

Member leaders cannot give permission to miss rehearsals or performances, be tardy, or leave early.

## **Senior Members**

All senior (12th grade) members, whether or not they hold a titled leadership position, are considered leaders and role models for the rest of the band. They should act as such and lead by example.

## Section Leaders and Captains

The staff chooses section leaders and captains based on proven leadership and excellent musical performance. They rehearse musical passages and work on section posture, breathing, quality sound production, and tuning.

---

**The section leader is not necessarily the best musician in the section. The section leader is the best person to exercise the section leader's responsibilities.**

---

## Responsibilities of the Section Leader

Sections leaders must:

- Monitor and coach members of their section
- Help individuals learn their music
- Make sure all members of the section know how to contact the section leader
- Warm up their section before performances
- Ensure their section passes uniform inspection
- Ensure their section leaves all areas clean
- Retrieve music left after rehearsals or performances
- Ensure their section knows of any rehearsal changes or cancellations
- Run sectional rehearsals
- Help teach drill
- Keep a drill chart at all times
- Pass out music for their section
- Serve as a guide point in basics block, and assist members having difficulty
- Support the Drum Major in keeping control during marching rehearsals
- Be responsible for the conduct and performance of their section in the stands.

## Band Council

The Band Council is elected by band members to work with the director in an advisory role. It consists of the Band President, Vice President, Secretary, Drum Majors, all titled leaders, a representative from each class in grades 9-12, and one middle school representative. Band Council elections are held during band camp. To be eligible for an office, candidates must be:

- Members in good standing
- Exemplary in attitude, loyalty, and dedication
- Willing to give their personal time for the betterment of the band.

The Council meets at least once a month with the director during the marching season, at the beginning of each month. They bring suggestions, complaints or other comments from band members to the director. One of the primary assignments of all officers is the band's morale.

## Equipment Manager

The Percussion Instructor, with the approval of the director, appoints the Equipment Manager. The Equipment Manager is responsible for all equipment of the drumline, Color Guard, Dance Team, and band proper, including all heavy instruments. See *Instruments and Equipment*.

The Equipment Manager must:

- Maintain a list of all equipment necessary for each section
- Report to the Percussion Instructor and senior Band Parent for each event
- Ensure that a first aid kit is with the band at all times
- Ensure that the Band Parents supply the band with a cooler of water
- Assist loading the truck
- Organize an efficient process for quickly loading and unloading equipment.

## Varsity Letters

A varsity letter is an honor that signifies dedication to and longevity with the band. The varsity letter also assists in choosing which four-year members qualify for the BPA scholarship. To obtain a varsity letter, members must:

- Have a minimum of three years continuous membership
- Exhibit exemplary attendance and attitude
- Display noticeable leadership skills
- Must be members in Good Standing and meet the requirements of members in the BPA bylaws (<http://www.shsmb.org/parents/bylaws2006.pdf>).

## Conflict Resolution

Conflict develops in large groups. It is important to recognize that the marching band exists to:

- Develop members into well-rounded musicians.
- Create individuals able to function effectively in groups.
- Provide a safe environment in which members can grow.

When conflicts arise, the parties should try to resolve the conflict amicably. If unsuccessful, the conflicting parties must enlist the aid of an impartial adult to mediate a solution.

## Conflict with Staff Member

Staff members are professionals hired by the district to teach the band. If a member or parent has an issue with the staff as a whole or individually, those parties should work toward a mutually agreeable resolution. If this is ineffective, the director or staff will enlist a school administrator to mediate toward resolution.

## **Conflict with Chaperone/Parent**

Chaperones are volunteer adults who dedicate their free time to bettering the marching band. They are parents who, similar to the staff, have the best interests of all members in mind. Treat them with respect.

Should a conflict arise between a member and chaperone, enlist another chaperone or staff member to help mediate the situation.