**Warwick High School Band**

**Chaperone Instructions**

**OVERVIEW**

As band parents, we are occasionally called to make the ultimate sacrifice...parent chaperone! This job is not for the weak individual; it takes a great deal of nerve to climb on a school bus with 20 to 40 high school and middle school students! In reality, this is probably one of the most enjoyable parts of being a band parent. A parent chaperone must come equipped with at least three attributes: a keen eye, a sense of humor, and the acceptance and tolerance that you haven’t seen everything!

Chaperones are basically another set of eyes for the band staff. We can’t be everywhere all the time. You are their greatest asset when they are spread thin. Your biggest responsibility to the students is their safety. Kids are invincible, or least they think they are. They take chances and sometimes don’t consider consequences before they act. **THIS IS NORMAL TEENAGE BEHAVIOR!** You can help the band staff by trying to avert kids from making mistakes. This sometimes takes all the psychic powers you have. You must be able to read minds and have eyes in the back of your head!

**BASIC RULES TO REMEMBER**

All school rules and policies are in effect for the duration of any trip taken by the band.

The bus driver is THE BOSS while we are on the road.

Chaperones do not have the authority to stop a bus while in transit.

Chaperones should spread themselves out through the bus. Chances are, nothing questionable is going to happen in the front of the bus.

It is up to the driver as to decide whether food and drink are allowed on the bus. We must keep the buses clean. No trash should be left on the bus when we arrive back at the school. Students are responsible for keeping the buses clean.

Students may talk as long as the noise level does not become a distraction for the driver. NO radio, CD player, or MP3 player is to be used without headphones. Use your judgment and also ask the bus driver if noise levels are too high.

There should be no screaming or yelling on the bus.

Everyone should remain seated at all times.

There is to be no talking, shouting, or gesturing out the bus windows. Windows should remain up as we depart a stadium or school and should remain up until we are out of that particular community to remove the possibility of the aforementioned.

Public display of affection is always a very uncomfortable subject. However, school policy addresses this issue. Students are permitted to hold hands but nothing beyond this. We are to let these kids have fun, but it is not our responsibility to help them through puberty. If you are uncomfortable with a situation, discreetly ask the individuals to put a little distance between them. If the situation continues, inform a staff member or Mr. Wolfe and they will take care of it. If this happens on a bus ride, you have authority to separate the students.

Students are not to change buses for any reason. The bus they ride on to the event should be the same one that they ride back to the school. Only Mr. Wolfe can reassign a student to another bus. We will check roll prior to leaving the venue. The buses will not leave until everyone is accounted for.

The buses are used to transport band students and parent chaperones. Students are not allowed to bring friends or relatives on trips. We cannot be legally responsible for them.

When we arrive at a location, equipment crew may exit the bus as soon as it stops.

All other students must remain on the bus until instructed to exit by Mr. Wolfe or the head chaperone on the bus.

While at away football games and competitions, chaperones should escort students to restroom facilities if a student does not have a “2” (buddy) to go with them. This is only necessary if it is not 3rd quarter at football games or before our time to be back in the stands at competitions.

All chaperones should spread out between the bleachers and concession stand to monitor our students during 3rd quarter at away games and during our time after performances at competitions. Unfortunately, in some communities, band students can become targets of local thugs. It is our job to insure that our kids remain safe and don’t make any poor decisions themselves.

**Discipline**

There is a misconception that chaperones are responsible for discipline and punishment of the rule breakers. This could not be further from the truth. In reality, the only student on the trip you can actually punish for breaking a rule is your own child. Only Mr. Wolfe or a band staff member has the authority to punish a student. It is a sad fact that legal issues make it important that we remember this. If someone were to take issue with this, it would be the Band Staff and Mr. Wolfe that would ultimately be held responsible.

**Decision-Making on the Road**

We cannot stop 2 buses, 2 trucks, and 2 vans just for one person to go to the bathroom.

There is no such thing as a five-minute pit stop. If we stop the group, we are looking at a minimum of twenty minutes.

If you go across the street to get you child a hamburger when no students were permitted to, you better bring back 99 more.

Kids WILL play you against the staff; it is their nature! They WANT you to tell them they can do something we said they couldn’t do! It’s the same thing when they go ask dad instead of mom.

What seems big to you may seem small to them and vice-versa.

High school students are noisy, they can’t help it! If you don’t like noise, please

don’t get on a band bus!

**So What can I do as a Chaperone?**

Though you don’t have authority to give discipline you do have authority as an adult and chaperone with the band. Here are just a few scenarios to help you decide if you should take action. Granted, this does not cover everything, and in some cases you will have to use your judgment as to whether or not what a student is doing should be tolerated or if it should stop.

 If you see a student doing something that is disrespectful to property or people, ask them to stop. If they continue, it is at that point that you contact Mr. Wolfe or a nearby staff member for discipline. If the case is severe enough, alert Mr. Wolfe or a staff member right away.

Students are to listen to any adult while at performances. Failure to listen to an adult is a form of insubordination and discipline will be dealt with in accordance to our Marching Band handbook. If you tell a student to stop doing something they should be respectful and listen.

If students are making inappropriate noises at incorrect times (ie: during awards ceremony or during another band’s performance) you have authority to tell them to be quiet. If necessary, you have authority to move students to the front of the group where are sitting in the stands. Once again, if the problem persists you should contact Mr. Wolfe or a staff member and the student(s) will face disciplinary consequences.

If students are not staying with the group when we are walking from place to place at venues you can remind them to stay with the group or keep up with everyone else.

Students must be mindful of behavior on buses. Remember, the bus driver’s word is law while on the bus. Once again, you have the authority to ask them to quiet down or remain seated. If a student does not listen you have authority to move their seat to the front of the bus. If you must do this please notify Mr. Wolfe and then the student will once again, face disciplinary action.

As a chaperone you will inevitably see students behaving immaturely, without thinking about repercussions or consequences. It is impossible to tell you what to do in every situation or prepare you for every situation. In the end you must ask yourself what students are instructed to ask themselves…..

***“Are my actions representing the Warwick Band, the Warwick Music Department, and the Warwick School District in a positive manner?”***

I thank you immensely for your willingness to dedicate and give up so much of your time to help make these activities possible and more enjoyable for our students! Though you may not all get your name in a program or on a plaque, the success of the band is greatly affected by the parents who serve as chaperones.

***THANK YOU!!!***