



Handbook

The NMB

The Normal Marching Band is the competitive marching ensemble for students from Normal Community High School and Normal West High School. This handbook describes its policies and procedures. Additionally, all members of the NMB are expected to adhere to the *NMB Student Conduct Agreement*, *NMB Commitment Form*, and their school's *Student Handbook*.

Communication

The NMB website (normalmb.org) is the primary source of information and communication. Additionally, students and parents should sign up for push notifications through the BAND App. Additional information on the app is included later in this *NMB Handbook*.

Participation

NMB membership is open to all NCHS and NCWHS students who commit to the schedule of rehearsals and performances as well as the financial commitment. Woodwinds, brass, percussion, and drum majors are required to enroll in a band course at their school. Participation in the drum line and color guard is by audition. Percussionists who are not placed in the drum line/battery are eligible to perform in the front ensemble (stationary percussion instruments).

In addition to the above, all performers must maintain **academic eligibility** by earning passing grades (A, B, C, D or equivalent) in five or more courses. Each student's grade report is generated weekly, and that report determines the student's eligibility for the following week. As this is a team event without a bench or alternates, the entire group is negatively affected when a member is ineligible and absent from rehearsals and performances. For this reason, members who are ineligible or in danger of becoming ineligible may be permanently dismissed from the group at the directors' discretion.

Attendance

The schedule of rehearsals and performances can be found on the calendar at www.normalmb.org. On a computer, hover over the EVENTS menu and click CALENDAR. On a mobile device, tap the ≡ menu icon in the upper-left corner, then tap the + sign beside EVENTS, and then tap CALENDAR.

- **Rehearsals in June:** In regard to unavoidable scheduling conflicts, June is the more flexible time of the season, however families should make every effort to schedule vacation around these three weeks and avoid conflicts. Students' failure to request time off from work is not considered an approved absence. Absences must be preapproved. Members whose position is earned by audition (drum line, color guard) are expected to attend all rehearsals.
- **Band Camp in July/August:** attendance at band camp in its entirety is mandatory (without exception) for all members of the NMB. Avoid scheduling back-to-school medical appointments and any other obligations during this time.
- **All Performances and Rehearsals after Band Camp:** attendance is mandatory (without exception) at all rehearsals and performances, including summer rehearsals between camp and the beginning of the school year.
- Absences will be considered "excused" in the case of illness and absence from school or death in the immediate family. In these cases, please communicate with the band directors in advance. Email budzinsr@unit5.org when communicating about absences. At the directors' discretion, absent students may be written out of the portion of the show covered in the missed rehearsal. Students with unexcused absences may be dismissed from the group.

Rehearsal Times

Organized rehearsal activities begin at the time published on the NMB website. Members are expected to arrive early enough to prepare their equipment and report to the appropriate area on the rehearsal schedule/plan by the posted start time. (Ten minutes before the scheduled time is barely on time.) The staff will make every effort to conclude rehearsal at the scheduled time. After rehearsal, it is common for students to take a few extra moments to meet with their sections, collect equipment, and put items away. We appreciate your patience!

Sectionals

Members of the student leadership team are required to arrange sectional rehearsals. These rehearsals may be held at a Unit 5 school or off campus, and they are in addition to the mandatory rehearsal schedule. During sectionals, student leaders help members of their sections refine music and marching skills or plan team-building/social activities. This process is encouraged by the directors, and NMB members are encouraged to attend these types of rehearsals.

Rehearsals

We ask that NMB members observe the following rehearsal information and expectations:

- **Cellular Phones:** NMB rehearsals are phone-free. This prevents distractions and promotes face-to-face student interaction. If extenuating circumstances warrant that a student carry their phone during a rehearsal, they should alert a band director prior to doing so.
- **Rehearsal Attire:** Chosen clothing should permit physical activity, comfort, and safety in all weather conditions. Layers are recommended, as we expect all kinds of weather and temperatures, both indoors and outdoors. Air conditioning sometimes leads to cooler rehearsal segments, even during band camp. Proper gym shoes are a must, and students should avoid clothing that inhibits proper stretching or athletic motion. We encourage students to wear a hat when in the sun and to use athletic braces or properly wrap injuries/existing conditions when appropriate. Woodwind, brass, and percussion members are expected to have sunglasses at rehearsals. Students who are inappropriately dressed will be instructed to call a parent/guardian to arrange for delivery of appropriate attire, or they will be sent home, and the absence will be unexcused.
- **Rehearsal Materials:** Students are to have the following items at all rehearsals: water bottle, binder with music/drill (including plastic page protectors, clothesline or strap, twist-ties, pencils), and instruments/color guard equipment with all necessary supplies and accessories (reeds, valve oil, sticks/mallets, guard gloves, etc.) Sunscreen, bug spray, and bandaids will be on hand at rehearsal—we always gratefully accept donations of these items.

Rehearsals and performances coming up in the near future are displayed on the homepage at www.normalmb.org. For a full calendar, select the CALENDAR link under the EVENTS menu.

Injuries/Health

Marching Band is a very physical activity. The directors must be informed before students with preexisting conditions or injuries begin participating in the activity, and the condition must be documented on the *NMB Medical Release Form*. Please include a **complete list of all medications** on the medical form. This information will be kept confidential and is very important in cases when a student is injured/in need of first aid or medical treatment.

Documentation from an appropriate medical professional must be given before a student is permitted to modify or be excused from rehearsal activities. Should a concussion occur, we will work with the school nurse to follow the Unit 5 Schools Concussion Protocol.

While it is acceptable for a student to communicate with the band directors regarding injuries or health concerns, we suggest that the parent(s)/guardian(s) follow up with the band directors via email. A prolonged injury that prevents the students' active participation in marching band may result in a meeting between the student, parent/guardian, and directors to determine the best course of action.

Students will not be permitted to resume participation in marching band after an injury, concussion, medical procedure, or health concern without medical documentation that indicates that the student is fit to engage in physical activity. This documentation should be given directly to the NMB directors. Once a medical professional "clears" the student to resume participation, the band directors will exercise their discretion with regard to how to best integrate the student into the group/production. This discretion includes but is not limited to defining the manner/extent of the student's participation, selecting which segments of the competitive show the student will perform, and setting the date/event when the student may resume participation in performances. Depending on the timeline and a variety of other factors, it may not be possible for the student to return to performing the show in its entirety. Every effort will be made to include the returning student, as appropriate, while also developing the show design in a way that the entire group remains competitive.

Band Camps

Please reference the band camp attendance policy on the first full page of this handbook.

All students must carry a water bottle at camp. (A large, half-gallon thermos or similar is recommended.) Coolers filled with cold water will be available for refilling bottles. Water breaks will be given regularly throughout the day.

An afternoon snack break is planned each day. Parents can help by signing up to provide snacks on the volunteer sign up genius link that will be posted at www.normalmb.org. Students should bring a sack dinner with nutritious food to give them a boost in the evenings!

Look for themed spirit days on the website calendar prior to the start of camp!

Parade Uniforms

The Parade Uniform is worn at parades and performances in warm temperatures. It includes:

- **Marching Band Parade Shirt** – Each student is responsible for purchasing their parade shirt in the online apparel store. (Color guard members do not need a parade shirt.)
- **Gloves** – woodwind and brass players wear black, long-wristed, cotton gloves (fingerless for flute/clarinet, full fingered for other performers). Avoid gloves with rubber grips, as they wear on the lacquered finish of the instruments. Color Guard members wear their guard gloves (consult the guard staff if you have questions). Percussionists do not wear gloves. Gloves are available for purchase at local music dealers.
- **Marching Band Shoes** – woodwind, brass, and percussion performers who have previously marched will wear their existing shoes. New students and students replacing their shoes should purchase black Super Drill Masters. These are available for purchase at local music dealers. *Mark the inside of both of your shoes with your name!*
- **Black Dress Pants** for all musicians – these are intended to look uniform, so avoid pairs that are overly fitted (“skinny”) or stylized. (Something that looks like Dockers will work great!) Be sure to try them on for fit, and consider that you will be tucking in your parade shirt. If the pants have belt loops, please wear a traditional, black leather belt.
- **Black Socks** – long enough so that skin does not show at the ankle.
- **Color Guard** – you will be fitted for a parade uniform, and you will receive shoe information at rehearsals.

Full Uniforms

The Full Uniform is generally worn at competitions throughout the fall. It includes:

- **The same shoes and socks** as the parade uniform.
- **Black band pants or “bibs,”** which will be sized and fitted to each student.
- **The 2021 uniform top,** which coordinates with the competitive show. Gloves will be selected in coordination with the jacket, and we recommend obtaining multiple pairs.
- **Band hat (“shako”) and hat wrap,** which will be sized and fitted to each student. When not in its hat box, the shako should always be carried (or worn) upright, with the brim facing front. Students should wait until instructed before putting the hat on for performances.
- **Undergarments** – students should wear boxer shorts or compression shorts and the specified show t shirt under their uniforms at all times. As competitions do not offer changing facilities for participating bands, this is necessary in order to ensure modest dressing prior to performances. In colder weather, it may be appropriate for students to wear long sleeves, warmer athletic performance wear, leggings, and/or long underwear under their uniforms. *The uniforms should never be worn over bulky items such as pants, sweats, joggers, jeans, sweatshirts, or hoodies, as this changes the fit, effects our uniform appearance, and leads to undue wear and tear on the fabric and seams on the bibs.*
- **Uniform Carts** – uniforms are stored and travel to and from competitions on uniform carts. We ask each student to bring a drawstring bag, labeled with their name, for shoe storage.
- **Color Guard** – uniforms are different from the band uniforms and vary from year to year. Specific instructions will be provided when uniforms arrive.

Appearance

In addition to being evaluated with regard to musical and visual skills, the marching band is also evaluated based on standards of uniformity and professionalism at all performances, especially competitions. As such, it is an expectation that all members represent the NMB uniformly and professionally. This includes appropriate attire as well as grooming: members’ hair must be long enough that it can be worn in a dance-style bun (for all performances) or short enough that it does not extend over the eyebrows or ears in the front, or touch the collar in the back. Any artificial hair coloring treatment must result in a naturally-occurring hair color. Students should be free of facial hair or be clean-shaven. No jewelry, make up, or visible finger nail polish is permitted when performing.

ACT/SAT Testing

There are no conflicts with ACT Tests on June 12 or July 17. Avoid registering for the ACT testing dates on September 11 and October 23 due to scheduled competitions. You may take the ACT on December 11.

There are no conflicts with the SAT Test on June 5. Avoid registering for the SAT testing date on August 28 and October 2.

Competition Days

We recommend clearing your schedule of commitments on all competition days. Contest hosts generally release performance times early enough to allow the directors to publish an itinerary one week or more in advance of the performance. Most competition days include a pre-contest rehearsal, travel to the contest site, at least one performance, a culminating awards ceremony, and the return trip back to Normal. Students are expected to travel with the band to performances when transportation is provided. Students who wish to return home with their parent/guardian following the performance must submit a note to their bus chaperone that includes a guardian's signature. Students whose guardian is not present to check them out at the time of departure will be asked to board the bus and return to school with the NMB. Though we make every effort to accurately predict our arrival time at school, we ask students to call or text home for a ride approximately fifteen minutes before our arrival. Help unloading the trucks/equipment as needed is much appreciated!

We encourage friends and family to attend all performances to cheer on the NMB! Most competitions include an admission charge as well as concessions and small souvenirs (program books, occasionally apparel, etc.) The band enjoys performing for a supportive audience, and the show will evolve from week to week—with new things to see each time! Funds raised by ticket sales and concessions support groups like ours when they host these events. When we host the NMB Invitational at IWU, visiting bands, their friends, and family support us, and it is a substantial fundraiser.

Etiquette

We ask that all NMB performers and supporters contribute to our positive reputation at performances. Please keep in mind that you represent our band, our schools, and our community to others in our area and from other parts of the country. As such,

- Silence cell phones and refrain from messaging or other phone use during performances.
- After our band takes the field and is introduced, the performance has officially begun. Please refrain from yelling anything out to your student or the band as a whole.
- Please stay seated during all performances. If you see or hear something *from any group* that you enjoy, let the performers know by applauding. Do not make derogatory comments about anyone or any group at any time. Maintain great sportsmanship and represent the NMB positively—in the stadium and on social media. Thank you!

Parent Volunteers

We are very excited about the opportunities that the NMB will offer our students! We are unable to offer these opportunities without family involvement. We understand that our families have a variety of talents, interests, and availability. The directors and the band parents' organization are confident that there are opportunities suitable for each parent/guardian. We ask that you become involved in one way or another—the experiences are rewarding, the company is good, and it is a great opportunity to watch the students accomplish wonderful things! Every task, large or small, makes a difference. **Volunteer opportunities will be posted regularly as a sign up genius on the NMB website.**

We ask that each NMB family volunteer as a part of the Normal Marching Band Invitational at IWU. There will be various committees and tasks to prepare for the event as well as various responsibilities on the day of the event. We are confident that one (or more) of these opportunities will be congruent with each family's schedule.

For additional information about getting involved, please contact the Parent Volunteer Coordinators.

COVID-19

The health and safety of students and staff are the top priority of the NMB. The directors are hopeful that the format of the 2021 season will be similar to those seasons held prior to 2020. Please note the following pandemic considerations:

- As it did in 2020, the NMB will comply with the various phases of the Restore Illinois Plan as well as policies set by Unit 5 and the Illinois Department of Public Health. NMB students are required to comply with evolving health protocols, as directed by the NMB directors.
- The 2020 season required flexibility, especially regarding scheduling. As we approach a return to "business as usual," the intention for 2021 is to follow the attendance policies above. Understand that some absences which were excused in 2020 may not be excused in 2021.
- The NMB will follow the schedule posted at normalmb.org as long as it is safe to do so. If necessary, adaptations will be made to ensure the safety of the group. Changes will be communicated as early as possible. Despite the pandemic, the 2020 season included virtual performances, live performances, remote competition appearances, and student recognition. We are confident in the group's ability to have a successful season in a variety of formats.
- A fully-remote option for student participation will not be offered, as this is an optional, group-based activity.

Dues/Fees

The Marching Band Dues cover individual student expenses, including but not limited to: uniform shirts/jackets, summer supplies, and show design/equipment costs. Each member is responsible for their \$150 deposit, which is due at the Registration Open House on April 11 or 12. The fee schedule is as follows:

\$350 total, payable as:

\$150 deposit due by April 12*

*Color Guard \$150 deposit is due at the Clinics/Auditions

\$100 payment, due on June 14

\$100 balance, due on July 20

Each family's first or only student is responsible for the total NMB Dues of \$350. Second and subsequent siblings from the same household are responsible for a total of \$300 each.

Each NMB member (or their family) is responsible for payment in full, unless individual fundraiser proceeds from the student's Miscellaneous Ledger in Charms are applied. Payments can be made by check, payable to the *Unit 5 Music Parents*, or by credit/debit card (through PayPal and Charms, with a 3% service charge.) For additional information about Miscellaneous Ledgers or PayPal Payments, see the Charms information at the end of this *NMB Handbook*. The NMB fees are committed to expenses at the time they are due, and based on individual vendor policies/deposits, it may not be possible to refund the fees should a student withdraw from the group after payment is made.

The Unit 5 Music Parents recognize that there are families who benefit from assistance in meeting these financial obligations. As such, multiple individual fundraisers are offered. It is expected that students who are unable to pay their dues raise funds through one or more of these fundraisers. The NMB Dues are not subsidized by the school district's free/reduced lunch program.

Families who have difficulty meeting the payment schedule are asked to contact the NMB Booster President for an alternate payment plan as early as possible. It is our philosophy that financial obligations should never keep a student from participating in the NMB, though communication is vital. Students (families) who have not been in contact to make alternate arrangements AND whose fee ledger is not current may be subject to removal from the NMB.

Fundraisers

The Unit 5 Music Parents support the NMB and its members through two types of fundraisers:

- **General Fundraisers** – these fundraisers support the group as a whole and are often events such as the Invitational, Car Washes, Garage Sales, Dine-to-Donate nights at local restaurants, and similar. General fundraisers make the program possible and offset what would be higher per-student costs.
- **Individual Fundraisers** – these fundraisers are generally sales of items such as cheesecake, fruit, candles, etc. The money that individual students raise is tracked in their "Miscellaneous Ledger" in Charms and can be applied toward band fees and similar expenses.

Activity Fee

The Marching Band Dues are different and separate from the Unit 5 Activity Fee that is assessed by the school district/athletic office in the fall. The Unit 5 Activity Fee is payable through Infinite Campus or the high school Athletic Director's office. The AD or their administrative assistant can confirm receipt of payment, discuss fees for free/reduced lunch students, and establish payment plans.

The BAND App

Important and time-sensitive announcements will be communicated by push notifications through the BAND App, which is available in your mobile app marketplace. Use this link to join our group within the app: tinyurl.com/nmbapp2021

The BAND App sends its own marketing push notifications (which are different from the notifications sent by the NMB.) Users can disable these extra messages by following these steps: Tap the "More" menu (three stripes, sometimes referred to as the "hamburger" button). Then tap the "Settings" gear icon. Tap "Push Notifications" and scroll to the bottom. Disable the "Event Promotion Notifications" and the "Service Notices" From BAND. We hope this makes for a better user experience!

In addition to push notifications, the BAND App is a great place to view the NMB calendar.

Photography

Mark Coons, Music Man5 Photos event photographer, attends many rehearsals and performances. His photos can be viewed through his site on SmugMug. Click on the Smile icon in the upper right corner of www.normalmb.org to view the page.

Music and Drill

Music and drill (marching materials) will be uploaded and shared with students through their Unit 5 Google Drive account. When music becomes available, we ask students to check their part assignments and print their own copy. The first copy of all drill will be provided, but if lost, students are responsible for printing additional copies before rehearsal. **Students are expected to have all materials at every rehearsal.** Once available, a link to the Music and Drill folder will be posted on the marching band website, under the INFO/FORMS menu. Due to our agreements with copyright holders, access to these materials can only be granted to marching band members through their Unit 5 Google credentials. Requests for access from other accounts will not be granted.

Social Media

The official Instagram of the NMB is @normalmarchingband. Feel free to use #normalmb and to tag this account when posting photos of events!

Due to copyright agreements, we ask that you not publicly post video or audio of the NMB. You may post video as “unlisted,” so that it is only viewable to those who have the link. If you take a video of a performance, the staff and students can benefit from seeing it—please email the link to the directors.

Some sections elect to have a “section” account on Instagram. These accounts must be set to “Private,” and access should be granted only to those who are affiliated with the NMB. These accounts must also follow @normalmarchingband and allow @normalmarchingband, @ironmenbands, and @normalwestbands to follow back.

Please remember that all band-related social media posts, positive and negative, reflect not only on the account that authors the post, but also the NMB as a whole. We ask that students and family members consider this when posting. Please display positivity, sportsmanship, professionalism, maturity, and support of other bands and organizations. Thank you!

Group Chats

A number of the sections in the NMB elect to use a group chat or application such as GroupMe in order to communicate instrument- or equipment-specific information, sectional times and locations, and other details. While these communications are not always monitored by the directors, we consider them to be an extension of the students’ participation in Marching Band. As such, students are expected to communicate in an appropriate manner at all times. All guidelines in the *NMB Conduct Agreement* and *High School Handbook* are enforceable by the directors and school officials.

The Directors

Ryan Budzinski
budzinsr@unit5.org

Lisa Preston
prestols@unit5.org

Paul Carter
carterp@unit5.org

Closing

We are excited about the teambuilding, collaboration, leadership, performance, and musicianship opportunities available to students in this ensemble! Thank you for your interest in and support of the NMB. We look forward to a great season!

Form Checklist

Have you turned in the following forms/fees?

_____ Online NMB Member Information Form, tinyurl.com/2021nmb
Please complete this as soon as possible.

_____ Forms that require electronic signatures: tinyurl.com/2021nmbforms
Commitment Form, Student Conduct Agreement, Medical Form
These forms are to be submitted with electronic signatures via signNow. You will be prompted to enter a student and parent/guardian email address in order to obtain and complete the forms.
(winds and percussion due on April 12 | color guard due at clinics/auditions)

_____ \$150 Dues Deposit (due by April 12)

_____ \$100 Dues Payment (due by June 14)

_____ \$100 Balance of Dues (due by July 20)

Remember to stop by the NMB Registration Open House at NCHS on Sunday, April 11 between 2:00 and 5:00 PM or Monday, April 12 between 5:00 and 7:30 PM. NMB Members must be present in order to be measured for their uniform.

THE NORMAL MARCHING BAND

CHARMS OFFICE ASSISTANT INFORMATION

FIRST TIME LOGIN INFORMATION

Visit www.charmsoffice.com or click on the  icon in the upper corner of normalmb.org.

Click “ENTER/LOGIN” → “PARENTS/STUDENTS/MEMBERS”

Most current high school students/parents have previously logged in to Charms and updated the password. If this is the case, use your updated password. If you are an eighth grader or new student, follow these steps:

- If you will attend NCHS, enter the school code: NorCommBands. Your student password is your U5 SIS number.
- If you will attend NCWHS, enter the school code: nwbands. Your student area password is your U5 SIS number.
- If you are not a current Unit 5 student, contact Mr. B at budzinsr@unit5.org to have an account created.

Special note: If your current junior high school uses Charms, your high school account will be different and separate from your junior high account. Contact Mr. B (budzinsr@unit5.org) with login questions or to have your password reset.

ONCE YOU HAVE LOGGED IN...

Change your password when prompted or by clicking the “Change Password” icon in the bottom row. It is important that both the student and the parent/guardian know the new password.

Update the student’s personal information by clicking the “Update Info” icon in the lower left corner.

- Please click “Add New Adult” to enter parent/guardian contact information. This is critical in order to receive email information.
- If you have multiple high school band students in your household, click the “Multiple Students” icon to consolidate all family information into one place.
- You may visit the financial page to view your miscellaneous ledger balance, trip payment ledger, and history.

TO PAY MARCHING BAND DUES FROM YOUR MISCELLANEOUS LEDGER

- Select the “Finances” icon on the home screen OR click the red \$ icon on the website header.
- Select “Transfer Request” (just below the website header).
- Select the type of fees that you would like to pay. Complete and submit the on-screen form.
- A confirmation will be sent to the email address(es) listed, and the transfer will occur the next time the band director or treasurer signs in to authorize transfers.
- You can return to the main financial page at any time to view your miscellaneous ledger balance, fees, trip ledger, and payment history.
- **A NOTE ABOUT MARCHING BAND DUES:** All marching band dues are listed in the “trips” section of Charms because this allows payments to be made in increments instead of all at once. Be sure to look there when processing marching band and color guard dues.

TO MAKE A CREDIT CARD PAYMENT

- Select the “Finances” icon on the home screen OR click the red \$ icon on the website header.
- Select “Marching Band Dues” from the pull-down menu named “Trip Ledger Detail.” If this is not an option, verify that you have submitted your NMB Commitment Form and email budzinsr@unit5.org to have it added.
- Click “Make Trip Payment.” A 3% PayPal Shipping/Handling Charge will be added to your payment automatically. On this screen, it is listed as an “Additional Donation” to the Unit 5 Music Parents Association.
- Click the “Start Payment” button – Charms will redirect you so you may login to an existing PayPal account or check out as a guest without creating a PayPal account. You will finalize your payment here.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Miscellaneous Ledger balances are maintained by the Unit 5 Music Parents Association and are not the student’s profit. This balance can be applied to student fees or fees for other students *from the same household*. They are not transferrable to unrelated students or unrelated students’ fees, and they are not payable to any member as “wages.” When a student graduates with a positive balance in their Miscellaneous Ledger, it will be transferred to a younger sibling if one is currently enrolled or will be during the next academic year. If not, the funds are credited to the general NMB account.

Charms Office Assistant Parent/Student Portal apps are available on the Google Play store and the Apple App Store. (Be sure to download the Parent/Student version, not the Director version.)