

What to Expect at Band Camp: For Parents

Ah, band camp. The wonderful time of year where our band members get to work in the hot sun for hours, learning their show and getting sunburnt. Sounds fun, right? We know you and your band member might be worried about what to expect, so for those families who are about to experience this for the first time, we want to share with you what many have learned through experience: what to expect at band camp. Go over this with your band member so they will know what to expect, too!

Make sure that your band member starts hydrating a few days before band camp starts. On the weekend before, make sure they're drinking water and not wearing themselves out. This will ensure that your band member will be one step ahead. Also make sure that the night before band camp, they get a good night's sleep.

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day - and this is especially true at band camp! Your band member should be eating a healthy breakfast every day before band camp to make sure that they don't faint or feel sick. A good healthy breakfast includes:

- Oatmeal
- Yogurt and granola
- Eggs and toast
- Fruit
 - Bananas, strawberries, watermelon, and raspberries are some examples
- Cereal

Before your band member leaves the house, make sure they have all the essentials. First and foremost, make sure that they're wearing sneakers! Any shoe other than sneakers is not comfortable to march in. And second, they should be wearing sunscreen! Make sure they are also wearing a hat or sunglasses - something to protect their face. We have dress up days at band camp, too, to make it more fun and some of our students go all out. The students will know what each day will be before the week comes. A personal favorite day is section day, so make sure your band member is dressed up and don't be afraid to snap a picture and send it to us!

Water is also extremely crucial. If your band member does not have water, they will not last the day. Many of the band members bring gallon jugs, which you can find at any store (WalMart will be a great place to look). Getting bright neon colored ones and writing their last name on the jug will help your band member know which one is theirs. We also recommend filling half of the jug with water the night before and freezing it, then filling the rest the next morning. Your band member will have cold water for the rest of the day. Camelbak products are also great, because your band member can literally carry their water around on their back, but the downside is it doesn't stay cool for very long.

Most students will also bring a backpack or a drawstring bag with them to band camp and out onto the field, and here are some things they should have in their bag:

- Extra sunscreen
- A small snack for the breaks
 - A granola bar, crackers, some veggies to munch on
- Their music
- Their dot book and drill coordinates
- Water
- A sweater (you never know)

Lunch is another important meal, which your band member will need some days, but not others! We're very lucky to have some great booster parents who prepare meals for the students, but only once or twice during the week. Closely check the calendar to see which days your band member will need to bring their own lunch. Healthy lunches will be the best and will help them get through the rest of the day.

After lunch, make sure your band member knows whether or not they will need to reapply sunscreen. Some days they will stay inside and work on music, other days they will go back out and do some visual work.

When you pick your band member up from rehearsal, come by a little early and check out what the band is doing on the field. It's always nice to see how they start out at band camp, then how they improve throughout the season! Just make sure to not distract them. A good tip for you would be to bring a bottle of cold water with you and a healthy snack for when they get in the car after a long day.

Band camp may sound scary and intimidating, but we can assure you that it's a great week of working together and getting to know each other and the show. Make sure that your band member knows to not get frustrated or upset during the week. They might feel like they're behind, or they don't know what they're doing, but reassure them that every band member has to go through this week along with them - they're not the only ones struggling. Make sure they know not to wait to ask a director a question, and that they can always ask the staff on the field for help, and they can ask the older members in their section. If your band member gets in the car after the first day and doesn't want to come back, encourage them to try again the next day. Every member is an essential part of the show and without them, there's a hole. Literally!

We hope that this "What to Expect" will help you and your band member feel more prepared and ready for the week that is "Band Camp".