



William Byrd High School
Percussion Handbook

SNARE

Est. 2018

Our Mission

Each year, the WBHS marching band presents a unique show that is performed by student musicians. Our shows involve educationally sound music, engaging drill design, visually artistic movements, uniforms and costumes, and field props. The WBHS marching percussion consists of the Battery (snare, tenors, and bass drums) and the Front Ensemble or Pit Percussion. This is a dynamic and vital group that joins the elements of music performance, marching, and theater.

The marching percussion at WBHS is built upon strong educational and personal growth through experience and musical interpretation achieved using technical precision and consistency. Through advanced musical techniques unique to percussion instruments, the role of this section is to reinforce and complement the entire band as well as showcase the particular capabilities of the instruments. The group is designed to create a learning environment conducive to a high level of performance.

Membership

Membership in this section is obtained through an audition process which challenges students with basic, intermediate, and advanced rudimentary exercises, warm-ups particular to the WBHS percussion section, and sometimes excerpts of the current year show music. Auditions take place every year to ensure the highest quality of players in the group. The Band Director and the Percussion Director/Staff will use the auditions to place students in various positions in the Battery and Front Ensemble. ***Leadership, attendance, performance, and maturity*** are **ALL** factored into the selection process.

Once students have received the warm-up packet and show music, memorization of these materials is expected. All warm-up material has a function of the show music and will only improve our members both physically and mentally.

***Students must be registered for band in the fall to participate.**

Rehearsal Expectations

Members must have all materials needed for a successful rehearsal. These include all music encased in a binder, instrument, drum sticks/mallets, a pencil, earplugs, and mind ready to rehearse! The expectation is that **ALL** music must be prepared for that particular rehearsal. It should go without saying that students should always strive to practice individually before the rehearsal. This discipline within the student will produce an excellent performer!

Every effort must be made to maximize the amount of quality and on-task rehearsal time within each rehearsal. Rehearsal must be completely free of excess noise, talking, or disruptive behavior of any sort. Our work ethic is essential to our success as a traveling and performing band. Each player is responsible for listening carefully to the ensemble for every element of performance. This pertinent listening serves as the backbone of precise, clearly articulated section playing which we will strive for at every rehearsal and performance.

Attendance Policy

Members are required to attend **ALL** rehearsals and performances. We understand that life sometimes gets in the way and conflicts do arise, but the key to minimizing any confusion or frustration about attendance is clear communication! Members are responsible for notifying both the Band Director and Percussion Director/Staff of missing any rehearsals or performances **well ahead of the event**. Consult the WBHS band handbook for further information on attendance and tardiness.

Social Media Policy

Cell phones, social media, and technology are great tools, but with those capabilities come risks. We must take care to maintain a positive reputation throughout social media. It is just as important to represent yourselves well in the social media community as in real life. With that in mind, band members must adhere to the following policies regarding cell phone use and social media:

- Phones are to be silenced or turned off during rehearsals at all times. If a cell phone is causing a distraction during rehearsal, the phone will be kept in custody of a staff member until rehearsal has ended.
- Never post anything on any form of social media that could compromise the reputation of the William Byrd High School Instrumental Music Program.
- Inappropriate comments on social media regarding the program, other members, staff, or other organizations will not be tolerated.

Academic Policy

During your time at William Byrd High School, your primary aim is to earn your diploma to set yourself up for long-term success. Therefore, you are expected to balance your time commitments properly. Throughout the course of the season, William Byrd High School band members are expected to:

- Attend all academic classes regularly.
- Maintain sufficient grades
- Be alert, attentive, and respectful during classes.
- At all times, remember that you represent the William Byrd High School Instrumental Music Program to school officials and employees. Behave accordingly.

Policy Enforcements

Failure to comply with any of the policies outlined in this handbook could result in one or more of the following actions:

- Warning from the director
- Formal apology by the student to the staff and / or the ensemble
- Passed over for or removed from a feature and / or solo
- Loss of 3rd quarter privileges during football games
- Withheld from performing for one or more shows
- Student dismissed from the rehearsal with parent / guardian notified
- Conference with color guard staff / band director / parent guardian
- Dismissal from the ensemble

Show Site/Performance Etiquette

Respect the uniform Foul language of any sort will not be tolerated. This uniform is a symbol of pride and representation of your school, your band, and yourself. Treat it with the utmost respect.

Always move in a group The percussion section is one of the most integrated parts of the band. We rely on one another in every aspect of a production and must achieve optimal unity. When moving to a rehearsal, show, or warm-up site, everyone is to be ready to travel to ensure no confusion or lack of organization within the group.

'Here and Now' Whether it is practice time, rehearsal, a meeting, or performance, always be mentally present. This means that no distractions deter members' attention from what is happening at the moment and the group can continue to get better.

Checkpoints

Before you even play a note, do a run-down of this posture checklist to set yourself up for success and create a unique presence:

1. Stand up straight and tall with chest pointed firmly, head slightly angled upward towards the press box
2. Relax shoulders, neck, arms, legs, and face
3. For Front Ensemble: legs are shoulder-width apart with toes pointing forward. For Drumline: heels are together, feet are a fist's length apart (first position)

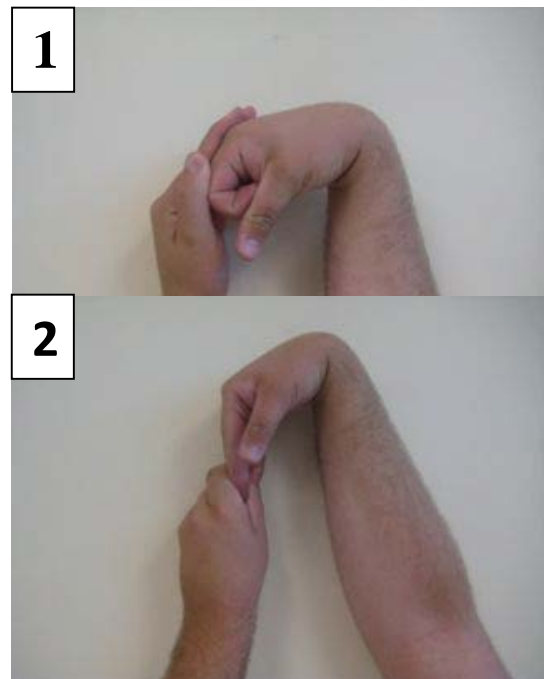
Stretching

It wouldn't make sense for an athlete to never stretch before or after exercise, so it likewise doesn't make sense to never stretch hands or wrists. For hands to move correctly and be able to make corrections, they need to be nimble and agile.

Here are a few recommended stretches. These stretches can help prevent and alleviate conditions such as tendonitis and carpal tunnel.

1. Make a loose fist with the thumb outside the palm. Gently push the hand downwards to stretch the tendons on top of the wrist. Hold for a few seconds and slowly release the fingers down.

2. Gently pull fingers down, hold for a few seconds and slowly release.



3. Flex the wrist backward and pull the fingers down. Hold for a few seconds and slowly release.

It is imperative to release when releasing a stretch slowly. Releasing too quickly can make the muscle cramp. After stretching, slowly shake your hand from side to side to get the blood moving again.



***We also recommend every percussionist to purchase earplugs as a precautionary measure against hearing loss.**

Sticks Out/In

The very first note of any piece of music or exercise is the **sticks out**. Additionally, the very last note of any piece of music or exercise is the **sticks in**. Practice the two back to back to be sure that they are exact opposites in direction.

Both sticks out and sticks in should be quick and staccato. If you are to play on beat 1, then sticks come out two beats ahead of time in preparation for the music. Sticks in should create an aggressive sound on the count after the last beat is played. Don't underestimate sticks out and sticks in. They serve a significant role in the quality of the music you are playing, and the aggressive uniformity of technique we are striving for as a section.

Stroke Types

In rudimental playing, there are four types of strokes. These are defined by the position of the stick before and after a note is played. The main pivot point of each of these strokes is the **wrist**. Use the stick and the weight of your hand in conjunction to produce a **full** sound with each stroke.

Full Stroke Starts high and ends high. The stick rebounds off the head and returns to where it began. The wrist should aid in the rebound of the stick but don't 'whip' the stick back with the wrist

Tap Stroke Starts low and ends low. There is little rebound

Down Stroke Starts high and ends low. No rebound

Up Stroke Starts low and ends high. Stick is pulled away from drumhead after striking it

Shifting Fulcrum

There are three main fulcrums that aid in determining how well you play your instrument. Whether you are playing marimba, tenors, or timpani, understanding the **shifting fulcrum concept** is crucial to your success as a percussionist. This concept is entirely dependent on the **tempo**.

Back Fulcrum Slow to moderate tempos. Back three fingers control of the stick. On the left hand in traditional grip, the back fulcrum is between the thumb and index finger. Use at 9" – 12."

Middle Fulcrum Moderate to quick tempos. Middle and ring fingers control the stick. Use at 6" – 8."

Front Fulcrum Quick tempos. Index, middle, and thumb finger control the stick. Use at 1" – 5."

***This technique is not 'forced' or 'hard.' It is very relaxed. Strive to stay as completely comfortable from head to toe**

The Height/Dynamic System

pp – 1" *p* – 3" *mp* – 6" *mf* – 9" *f* – 12" *ff* – 15"

Tips for Practicing Efficiently

1. **Always** practice performance.
2. Be a **patient perfectionist**.
3. Always play with proper technique and approach.
4. Minimize bad habits (like fidgeting or tensing up.)
5. Maximize healthy habits (like relaxation and proper posture.)
6. Realize that a great percussionist is not determined by how much or how fast they can play, but how **smart** they can play.
7. **Always** practice with a metronome.
8. Practice with a **mirror**, so you don't have to look down at your technique. How you hold yourself is a part of performing so practice your 'look.'
9. Practice does NOT make perfect; it makes **confident**.
10. Know that you are different and unique in your playing. Be open to yourself and learn at your own pace. Take your time.

Remember, music is not 'hard' or 'easy'; it is either familiar or unfamiliar. If it is unfamiliar, work on it until it becomes *familiar

***Learning percussion can be very challenging and requires a consistent amount of patience and persistence, but its rewards are very numerous. Nothing can take the place of private, one-on-one instruction in music, especially given the complexity of proper percussion playing. Consider taking private lessons from your percussion instructor(s) or local percussion teacher to ensure rapid technical, musical, and personal growth as a musician and percussionist**

Top Ten Ways to Protect Percussion Equipment

10. Do not let non-percussionists play school percussion instruments

9. Refrain from drumming on “non-drum” surfaces

Playing on a concrete or brick surface will chip the stick tips which can damage drum heads.

8. Do not overtighten hardware (drum and cymbal stands)

This can strip the wing nuts. Also, loosen the wing nuts before adjusting the height of a stand.

7. Refrain from leaving cymbals on the floor

Cymbals can invert if you step on them, and the cymbal will be weaker.

6. Use the right mallets on the right instruments

This means no drumsticks on mallet instruments, timpani, or bass drums. No hard bell or xylophone mallets on marimba or vibes. Also, do not drum on the cords that hold the bars on mallet instruments or the frame of mallet instruments.

5. Cover mallet instruments and timpani when finished

Dust can collect on the heads which will transfer to your mallets. You could even carry a cloth in your stick bag to wipe dust of the keys/heads.

4. Return all beaters and sticks to the stick bag when finished

This includes small accessories such as triangle beaters.

Keep yarn and felt mallets (including bass drum mallets) off the floor.

3. Move instruments properly

Do not push keyboard instruments from behind – it will damage the frame. Get in front of the instrument and pull it. Lift the wheels if you come to a bump or crack in the sidewalk or door frame.

Also, move timpani by grabbing the arms - not the rim. Keep the pedal off the ground and floor.

Make sure wheel locks are “off”.

2. Keep your hands-off timpani mallet tips.

Keep timpani mallets in plastic bags when not using otherwise the material will start to fray.

1. Percussion instruments are for playing, not holding stuff

Mallet instruments cannot take the weight of books and other objects. Eventually they will start to sag in the middle. Putting an unnecessary amount of pressure on a drumhead may throw it out of tune.

Battery

The original purpose of the drumline was to provide a consistent and constant pulse for the rest of the marching band. Over time, however, field show arrangers began to showcase the unique capabilities of marching percussion to provide a well-balanced and dynamic percussion section. This dynamic has transformed into more challenging percussion repertoire and movement today. Despite faster and flashier music and drill, the original intention of the marching percussion section remains in place. It is our main objective to provide a **precise** and **consistent** pulse throughout the entirety of the show.

Being a member of the drumline requires a high amount of **precision** in playing and movement. This means that your understanding of pulse and rhythm becomes well-developed as you learn and improve as a percussionist.

Along with precision, drummers must become **disciplined** and well-versed in the art of *listening*, *focusing*, *avoiding distraction*, and *applying constructive criticism*. It takes a lot of skill to avoid the many distractions that are present when rehearsing and performing.

As percussionists, we rely on our peers more than most other sections. If a bass drummer or any other player misses several rehearsals, the entire section suffers and time must be spent re-learning drill and music. Keep in mind the **teamwork** and **camaraderie** it takes in order to make this section run smoothly and sound connected. Think of how your decisions may impact your section before making choices regarding the drumline.

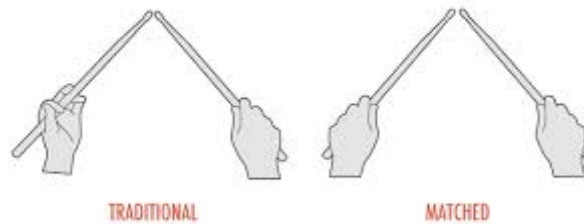
Focus on **A. R. T.:**

- Accountability** - Hold yourself accountable
- Responsibility** - Commit to your responsibility
- Teachability** - Be teachable

Snare Drum

Grip

At WBHS, we use both traditional and match marching snare drum grip.



Right Hand (RH): Turn your hand palm up. Place the stick in the middle of your hand and leave about an inch hanging off the bottom of your hand. Create a front fulcrum by connecting your thumb and index finger firmly (not tightly), and letting your middle and back fingers relax naturally on the stick. Flip your hand over where the top of it is parallel to the sky. Keep your hand as flat as possible. **All strokes begin with the wrist (wrist fulcrum).** The fulcrum shifts to the front as tempos increase.

Left Hand (LH): Hold your hand out as if you are about to give a handshake to someone. From here, place the stick in the crevice of your thumb and index finger. Wrap your thumb around the stick and connect it to the first knuckle of your index finger. Rest the stick on your ring finger where the nail meets the skin. Reinforce the ring finger with the pinky finger by placing it directly under it. Rest your middle finger on the top of the stick naturally. **The shoulder and bicep should always be relaxed. Rotate wrist as if turning a doorknob.**

For Match grip the left hand mirrors the right.

Playing Position

There are two basic positions; Tacet and Playing. To tacet means to rest, so the tacet position is the position that the hand is in while it is not playing. In tacet position, the sticks should be just high enough so that the index fingers can touch the back of the rim. The thumbs should not wrap around the sticks, and they should both be on the back of the sticks.



In general, when you are in playing position, bring your sticks to a 90° angle resting on the head 1" off of the surface. Keep the beads of the sticks as close together as possible without touching.



The arms should be relaxed and at the sides. They should not be far away from the torso, as is a common tendency. Relaxation is key.

INCORRECT

INCORRECT

CORRECT



Handbook Acknowledgement

By signing this form, we acknowledge that:

1. We have read ALL pages of the WBHS Percussion Handbook.
2. We have had the opportunity to clarify any questions or concerns regarding the handbook.
3. We agree to abide by the policies contained in the handbook.
4. We understand and accept consequences that may arise from failure to adhere to these policies.

Student Signature

Date

Parent / Guardian Signature

Date

**Please return this signed sheet to your instructor or band director no later than
Friday, July 13, 2018**