

THE ABC'S OF CHAPERONING BAND STUDENTS

WHAT TO EXPECT

1. Expect the unexpected. A bad test, a great day at school, the weather, the moon, stress levels, all of these affect the bus ride to the contest or football games! Being flexible is one of the keys to being a good chaperone. Our job is to keep them safe and alive while projecting a good image of our school. The side benefits of this calling are getting to know the kids (they are really cool!) and being able to play a good part in a teenager's life. YOU also have a major impact on the bus ride-leave your bills and job stresses in the parking lot because they do indeed pick up on them. The old saying "If mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy" is very valid on these sometimes long and tiring rides. Dare to have fun! The results are worth it!
2. As a rule, band students are LOUD! They don't mean to be, they just are. If noise bothers you, don't do this job. They quiet down eventually, but it is usually at 11pm.
3. Over the years, the kids have grown to expect snacks after the games-mainly because they are starving. Their stomach is a sure way to their heart! Popular menu items include anything in the \$0.99 boxes at Walmart, popcorn in baggies, candy-they will eat anything! I have found that it runs about \$5-6 per chaperone engagement to keep them happy.
4. Some of these kids really need hugs and need to talk. I try to encourage this, but don't allow them to badmouth their parents or whoever the problem is with. Have them talk about the problem, not the person; they feel better in the end, and we don't have to look at any parents or siblings in a strange or horrified manner. I offer general advice only when asked – it is a delicate area we tread to be chaperone/counselors for these kids.

THE RULES IN A NUTSHELL

1. Stay seated – with traditional expectations:
 - a. Whoever is doing all the girls' hair gets to stand. They are experience and know where to place themselves safely.
 - b. Students will begin standing up and dressing when we are about 15-20 minutes from our destination. Let them. It is the only way to be ready the split second the band directors want them outside.
2. The volume has to be lower in bad weather and heavy traffic as a courtesy to the driver
3. You may have to help with zippers, finding hats, etc. The bus is one giant closet now.
4. Outside, help hand out gauntlets and plumes. Help collect them after they are finished marching.
5. When the busses return to school, find all lost items and deposit them in the band hall, pick up trash (if you tell them to, the kids will do this), close windows.
6. No swearing or being mean to anybody.
7. Nothing gets thrown out the bus windows.
8. No practicing instruments while on the bus, no radios playing (headphones/earbuds are OK)
9. Daters may sit together only if they act appropriately (you'll learn who they are weekly).
 - a. At night or in low lighting, the buses are to be separated by boys and girls.

If there is repeated trouble with anyone on the bus, please report it to a director immediately. Do not wait for the activity to get out of hand.

CHAPERONE TIDBITS

Realize that with this many band kids, you may not be chaperoning every time you sign up. Some board members need to be there all the time, the rest is volunteer parents. I will try my best to get everyone on when they want to be there, and I do give special consideration to single moms who may not want to drive a million miles by themselves in the rain, and the parents of seniors!