

Student / Parent Guide to Decatur Band 2020 California Trip (edited 10/15/19)

Introduction:

This short guide is intended to provide students and parents of Decatur Band travel policies and procedures, and what to expect while traveling with the Decatur Band. This guide includes general information applicable to all Decatur Band travel events as well as some additional information specific to this year's Disney trip.

Our first priority for Decatur Band travel events is the safety of all participants, followed closely by learning, teambuilding and fun. The policies and expectations described in this guide have been developed based on experience from multiple prior trips and are specifically designed to maintain safety for all while still maximizing the opportunities for fun, teambuilding, learning and all other trip objectives.

If you have any questions that are not covered in this guide, please feel free to contact either of the following for further information/clarification:

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2020 California Band Tour Important Dates:

Nov. 15, 2019 – Deposit \$150 due. (checks payable to Decatur HS, pay at finance office)

Dec. 1, 2019 – Cancellation deadline.

Jan. 17, 2020 – Remaining balance due. (checks payable to Decatur HS, pay at finance office)

Mar. 23, 2020 – Truck loading @ Decatur

Mar. 25-28, 2020 – California Tour

Mar. 30, 2020 – Luggage pick up @Decatur

Expectations of Students:

It is a privilege to travel with the Decatur Band, not a right. All those invited to travel with the band have earned that privilege by demonstrating band citizenship, commitment, teamwork, and behavior standards expected of Decatur Band members. While traveling, students are reminded that every student individually and all students collectively represents the Decatur Band at ALL TIMES, 24 hours a day. Accordingly, it is expected that EVERY STUDENT will maintain the highest standards of excellence in personal judgment and behavior, and will help other Decatur Band members to do the same. This includes, but is not limited to, the following categories:

SAFETY – Students are expected to use their best judgment and common sense to ensure their own safety and the safety of fellow band members.

RESPECT – Students are expected to treat all others with the upmost respect. This includes trip leaders and chaperones, authority figures, designated student leaders and all fellow Decatur Band students. This also includes all members of the general public encountered during the trip.

RESPONSIBILITY – Students are expected to demonstrate and exceed levels of responsibility commensurate with Decatur Band standards. This includes such things as honoring all commitments, being fully prepared for all performances and activities, being on time or early for all designated call times, etc.

BE YOUR BEST – While traveling, Decatur Band students are ALL IN, all the time. That means you are fully committed to the best performance you can provide, EVERY TIME. You will ALWAYS be looking out for and looking after fellow Decatur Band members. You will ALWAYS be aware that you are representing the Decatur Band and will always strive to exceed the highest standard of dedication, teamwork, behavior and band citizenship.

Decatur Band students have typically easily met or exceeded these expectations on prior trips. Further, this exemplary behavior has enhanced the trip experience and fun for all trip participants. However, exceptions can and have occurred. Failures to meet these expectations have consequences, possibly serious consequences, not only for individual students but for the entire Decatur Band and possibly for future bands. Remember this is a Decatur High School function, and all Decatur High School and FWPS rules and policies apply at all times. Further, pride and citizenship in the Decatur Band carries with it an implied standard that exceeds the minimum school and district policies. It is therefore in the best interest of all Decatur Band students to strive to exceed expectations at all times while traveling with the Band.

Chaperones:

Chaperones are an important part of the Decatur Band travel team. They are there to help Mr. Chang and to provide adult supervision when and where needed. This is not a vacation for chaperones. They are selected based on their willingness to commit to all the functions they may be called upon to perform. Chaperones volunteer their time and travel at their own expense. They are expected to always be available and to provide guidance and whatever support is required 24 hours a day from the check in at the airport to the final return home.

Chaperones deserve and will expect the respect and cooperation of all traveling students. Similarly, chaperones will be expected to provide due respect to Decatur Band students. Most chaperones will have a specific group of students assigned to them (see Chaperone Groups in the Policies / Procedures section). However, any chaperone will assist with any student if needed. Chaperones have the authority to exercise disciplinary actions if necessary after coordinating with the Decatur Band director, but this is rarely needed due to the usual high standards maintained by Decatur Band students.

Policies / Procedures / Plans

Chaperone Groups / Check In – Most chaperones will be assigned a group of students. These students are the chaperone's primary responsibility throughout the trip. It is not necessary that a chaperone group remains together at all times throughout the trip. However, there will be periodic times where all of the group members must check in with their assigned chaperone. This is an important safety procedure as it confirms the location and well being of students periodically throughout the day. Unless predetermined on the itinerary, the chaperone determines and coordinates check in locations with their group. Students must report IN PERSON to the check in location at the appropriate time. It is not acceptable to "phone or text it in". Any student who is considerably late or absent for a chaperone check in will be subject to disciplinary actions (e.g. riding the flying Dumbo with a chaperone, or worse). Chaperones should have all group members' cell numbers and vice versa. It suggested that all group members have all other members of their respective group programmed into their cell phone for potential communication needs.

Student Independence – We understand that students will not be accompanied by a chaperone at all times during the trip. While we prefer that students remain in large groups when not accompanied by a chaperone, we recognize that will not always occur. However, we require that independent groups be a **minimum of THREE students**. This will ensure reasonable safety. If a chaperone witnesses a single or pair of students on their own, they will be asked to remain with the chaperone until one or more students can join them to form a larger group.

Coming and Going – All band member and assigned chaperones will enter Disney property together. Once there, all band members and assigned chaperones will stay on Disney property (which includes the Magic Kingdom, California Adventure, and Downtown Disney) until everyone leaves the property together. The only exceptions will be for emergent or health situations. Students will only leave Disney property accompanied by a chaperone and only after coordinating with Mr. Chang.

Drugs / Alcohol / Tobacco – While this has not been a problem on recent band trips, we want to make the policy on these substances abundantly clear. While traveling with the Decatur Band, all Decatur High School and FWPS policies apply to all students throughout the trip, 24 hours a day. There will be zero tolerance for the use and/or possession of any and all drugs, tobacco and/or alcohol, and/or being in the presence of anyone using any of these substances. Any violation of this policy can and will result in the offending student being sent home at the student's/family's expense, and subsequent disciplinary action according to applicable DHS and/or FWPS policies. There will be no negotiations on this, so just don't do it.

Student Medications – It is FWPS policy that student medications be retained and dispensed by a designated FWPS employee during extended trips such as this. This is for the safety of all students. Arrangements for required student medications should be made well in advance of the trip with Mr. Chang and the Decatur nurse's office.

Sea-Tac Departure – There will be no bus from Decatur to the airport on the day of departure. Students need to arrange their own transportation to the airport. Ride sharing is encouraged. Arrival time at the airport is very early (3:00am), but this is necessary due to the large group size and potentially long delays passing through airport security. Please respect your fellow band members by arriving on time (or early) and reporting immediately to your chaperone group. Once all band members have arrived, we will check everyone in and proceed through the security check to our departure gate. If you are late, you risk missing check in and may be left behind.

We will NOT be checking any luggage on this flight. All instruments and luggage will be loaded the previous morning and trucked down, and will meet us at the hotel when we arrive. A SMALL carry on is permitted if it will fit underneath the seat in front of you. DO NOT plan to carry on your clothing luggage.

Airplane – Please demonstrate your Decatur Band citizenship and be respectful of flight attendants and fellow passengers. Take your assigned seat upon boarding the aircraft. It is **NOT OK** to change seats with others even with another Decatur student. Do not stand or sit in aisles, and do not ask non-band members to trade seats with you. Please note this is a pretty short flight and the airplane will likely be very full, so it would be best to just settle in to your assigned seat until we land.

Buses – Upon arrival at LAX/SNA, we will summon the contracted buses to pick us up for the day's events. Buses will be assigned by chaperone group. This is to facilitate quick and accurate attendance. Chaperones will be responsible to ensure everyone in their assigned group is on the bus before it departs from each stop. Everyone's cooperation will help ensure this process goes smoothly. Please be respectful of the bus driver while they negotiate LA traffic.

Meals – Students will be responsible for their own meals during this trip. There are multiple restaurants within easy walking distance of the hotel where travelers can eat breakfast. We also plan to stop at a grocery store on the way to the hotel in case students want to buy breakfast/snack items they can keep in their rooms. The rooms have small refrigerators but do not have microwaves, and do not have bowls or utensils. Roommates may wish to coordinate on such items if desired. Lunches and dinners will be purchased on Disney property except for the first day. In the past, students have saved money on meals by combining resources and sharing food orders.

Money – Students will need to purchase meals while on this trip, and may want some additional money for souvenirs and incidentals. At least 11 meals will need to be purchased. We believe an average of \$15 per meal should be sufficient to cover Disney food prices as long as students are somewhat conservative with their purchases, which results in our recommendation of at least \$150 spending money per student. Cash is always acceptable, but some don't care to carry that much cash. Possible options are a debit card or a prepaid credit card. We do not recommend travelers checks. They are a hassle, and there are very few places that accept them anymore.

Hotel – The hotel is not only your home, but also the home of your roommates and many others. Please treat it with the upmost respect. We would like to have the opportunity to return to the hotel for future band trips.

Decatur Band Hotel Room Policies –

- Only Decatur Band students and chaperones allowed in our hotel rooms, no outsiders
- Boys do not enter girls' rooms, girls to not enter boys' rooms
- Room doors to remain propped open if anyone other than assigned room members inside
- Switching room assignments is only permissible after consideration and approval from Mr. Chang based on individual circumstances
- Chaperones will conduct a room check every night at lights out time. All students must be in their assigned rooms at this time and must remain in their rooms until they are released by the chaperones the next morning.
- Random bed checks may be conducted by chaperones at any time during the night.
- Although the hotel has a pool, swimming will not be allowed during the trip.

Violation of any of the above policies will result in disciplinary action at the director's discretion, up to and including being sent home at their own expense

Performance – The performance is Decatur's chance to show our stuff, and everyone needs to be ALL IN. Obviously this means playing to the absolute best of your ability. However, Disney is all about professionalism and "The Show". This means it has to sound good AND it has to look good. So it is critical to be fully prepared. Here are some key points.

- Double check that your FULL band uniform (including shoes, socks, ties, etc) is packed before in your luggage at home
- Make sure your instrument, music and FULL band uniform are loaded in the truck the morning of the performance (You will not be allowed to perform if you are not in FULL uniform)
- Be at the assigned meeting area at least 5 minutes early
- Be attentive, listen and follow all instructions from the Disney cast members
- Be professional. Stay focused and don't allow yourself to be distracted during the performance.
- Smile! Make it fun for you, your fellow band members, and the audience. That's what Disney is all about.

Workshop – Most band members will find this the fastest 90 minutes of their band career. This is a very cool experience that many band members have requested over and over. Don't waste this opportunity. Tune in to all it has to offer. This experience will be most beneficial if you approach it like the performance except that you don't need to worry about uniforms. Be early to the meeting area, follow the instructions of the Disney cast, and above all, stay focused and play to the absolute best of your ability. You will be amazed at what this band can accomplish when everyone is all in!

Arrival home / Dismissal – Please pre-arrange for rides home from the airport following our arrival. We will not have any checked luggage so there will be no luggage related delay. Mr. Chang will release students individually once they have confirmed their ride has arrived. Carpooling is encouraged.

Instruments and Luggage – All instruments, music and luggage will be transported by truck driven by Booster volunteers. The truck will be loaded at Decatur on Monday (March 23) night between 5:30-6:00pm, and will meet us at the hotel when we arrive on Wednesday. Instruments and music will be locked in the truck during our stay so that they do not consume available space in the rooms. The truck will transport the instruments and uniforms onto Disney property for the performance and workshop. All luggage will be reloaded onto the truck on Tuesday morning. Students will claim their luggage and instruments when the truck returns to Decatur on Monday evening.

Please note that we will not be checking any bags on our flights to and from LAX. Even though we are not checking bags, we still need to minimize the baggage we take. Please review the suggestions of what to and not to bring when packing. Remember we will only be gone four days, and nobody really needs that much stuff. We do not believe it is necessary for roommates to combine bags, but please limit yourself to one small to medium bag for this trip. Also, please consider packing your uniform on a hanger and in some kind of protective bag (dry cleaning bag or similar) with some means of identification. Uniforms will all be transported in the truck for the performance, and students need to quickly identify which uniform is theirs.

What To / Not To Bring – Limit is one small bag per person. Pack light, you won't really need that much

Bring

- Picture ID with exact name used on TSA form (keep this with you at all times)
- Money/credit/debit card
- Instrument and accessories / Music
- Band uniform (complete including shoes, socks, ties, accessories, etc)
- Band T-shirt and Sweatshirt
- Clothing for 3 days (warm weather appropriate)
- Comfortable walking shoes (Very Important)
- Personals
- Cell Phone / Charger
- Camera
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen (not on airplane)
- Snacks if desired
- SMILES / POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Don't

- Heavy jacket
- Excessive amount of clothing
- Swimming Suit
- Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco
- Weapons of any kind

Grooming items – The rooms have hair dryers so there is no need to bring one. You may want to coordinate with roommates regarding other accessories such as curling and straightening irons. It may not be necessary for each roommate to bring their own and have four of each in the room.