

Conflict Resolution

Working as a team sometimes means that there will be disagreements and conflicts within that team. This is normal, and can be a positive thing for the organization, so long as it is handled in a positive manner. There is a right way and a wrong way to handle problems within the band. It is expected that occasionally emotions get the better of us, but it is equally expected that you make every effort to handle conflict in an adult manner.

Some general guidelines for conflict resolution or as follows:

Use the Chain of Command when Reporting Problems.

Your Section Leader should be the first person you report to with issues. Reporting a minor conflict to the Director is inappropriate and inefficient. Only move up the chain of command if you cannot get the help you need, or if it is a particularly delicate situation that should not be shared with other students.

Solve Problems Off the Field.

Public disputes interrupt the rehearsal and performance process for everyone. Plus, public discipline, humiliation, or challenge is very rarely effective.

Try to Remain Calm.

Yelling only makes problems worse, and allowing a conflict to escalate to physical contact can be dangerous and/or lead to University disciplinary procedures.

Walk Away from Conflicts when You Can.

The normal stress of a rehearsal or performance can turn a little problem into a major fiasco. Once you step away and have a chance to relax, you may realize that it wasn't such a big deal after all. A little bit of distance and breathing room always makes conflicts easier to figure out.

Praise Publicly – Criticize Privately.

This is one of the most valuable pieces of advice anyone can ever learn. When we work in groups, we all have to help maintain high morale. Public praise is the cheapest and most effective way to improve performance, but public criticism can be devastating – and not only to its target! Private criticism allows the other person to calmly absorb the information without fear of humiliation, thus keeping tempers and morale safe.

Offer Constructive Criticism, Not Destructive Criticism

Nothing is more frustrating and dehumanizing than the “drill sergeant” treatment, where someone gets in your face and tells you how terrible you are without any suggestions for improvement or acknowledgement of your efforts and strengths. If you must offer criticism, make sure that it is made up of suggestions for improvement, not personal attacks. And if you disagree with an idea or a policy, have an alternative solution to offer.

Resolve Conflicts with Directors and Staff Privately

Conflicts with any staff member should always be handled outside of rehearsal.