

Jefferson Middle School Band Handbook

Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Jefferson Middle School (JMS) Band to build meaningful relationships and provide a dynamic learning environment so that all students will grow and experience success.

Band Policy

This handbook is designed to assist band members and parents in understanding areas of responsibility regarding participation and representation of the JMS Band. Becoming familiar with this policy will enable each individual to make the most of this great opportunity and to have success in band, become a better person and musician thus, ultimately, become a valued member in their high school band programs and beyond.

The happiest student is one who improves through regular habits of practice and daily progress. They must not only know right from wrong but must be able to stand for principles and develop a high sense of purpose toward which they are willing to work. **Responsibility** is the focus behind any level of achievement within this program. We intend to conduct ourselves in a manner that will facilitate the learning of all students.

We firmly believe that each student will improve through regular practice. It is the responsibility of each student to commit to regular practice to continue to grow individually and to make a better contribution to the band. Maturity is being aware of how individual actions will affect others. We work to instill maturity in all our students.

Objectives of the Band Program

- ★ To teach music by its actual performance
- ★ To develop performance skills on the various wind and percussion instruments for all aspects of performance
- ★ To provide for the musical needs of the school and the community
- ★ To develop discrimination and appreciation with regard to quality and selection of music
- ★ To acquaint the students with music theory/history/culture and how history, musical composition, and musical cultures relate to students' lives and musical experiences
- ★ To provide all students with the opportunity for worthy use of their time, a means for self expression, and a healthy social experience.
- ★ To develop the ability to function as a responsible member of a group, enhance personal interaction, and to develop a community of music appreciation and creation.

Terminology We Use

- ♫ **Advanced Bands**= Honor Band (Advanced Band 6032), Symphonic Band (Intermediate Band 6024), Jazz Band (open to concurrently enrolled instrumental music students)
- ♫ **Beginner(Beginning) Band**= All students in band for 1st time or on a new instrument (Beginning Band 6017)

Calendar Information

- ♫ As Performances are part of the student's band grade, the TEKS and are vital to the success of our students and our band program (and of course *FUN!*), they are **REQUIRED**.
- ♫ The CALENDAR includes as many dates and as much information for the School Year as possible.
- ♫ Please put the respective dates for your band student(s) on your Family/Home Calendar right away to avoid conflicts and consequences for missed performances.

Expected Discipline

- ♪ Musical Discipline: Efforts toward proper tone production, proper hand position/posture, proper articulation technique, rhythmic understanding, notation, phrasing, dynamics, proper practice habits, rehearsal procedures, and rehearsal etiquette are expected at all times.
- ♪ Classroom (Behavior) Discipline: Correctly entering the classroom, taking out instruments, moving around the classroom, following classroom procedures, appropriate response to praise/correction, respect for equipment, appropriate conversation before/during/after class, visits elsewhere representing Jefferson Middle School and the JMS Band.

Consequences

The Band will follow all Discipline Measures as set in the Jefferson Student-Parent Handbook to include verbal warnings, student/teacher conferences, contact of the parent, and use of the JMS Detention Hall and/or Referral System. Any discipline problems will be handled on an individual basis. Major school offenses within or outside of the band program can result in a schedule change or removal from band or band related events, contingent upon individual circumstances and band directors' recommendation.

Attitude

The single most important factor for a successful band member is a positive attitude. In a large performing ensemble such as a band, attitude must begin at the individual level. Each member of the band must want to be a member of a winning organization. "Great bands do what Good bands don't want to do."

Band Placement

- ♪ Beginning Band Students (no experience) are placed into a beginning band period based on the instrument they will play. They will then split daily within that class period according to the instrument that they play.
- ♪ Placement in a Jefferson Beginning Band class is determined by an interview at which time the band directors and experts let the students play on several different mouthpieces and equipment to see which one is the best fit for that student.
- ♪ Advanced Band Students (one or more years experience) are placed in one of two performing/competing groups: Honor Band or Symphonic Band. Placement in the Jefferson Advanced Band classes is determined by year-long audition. Final evaluations may take place in the spring via audition. Auditions are derived from the following areas:
 1. SCALES – all region scales and chromatic scale
 2. SHORT ETUDE (song)
 3. SIGHTREADING – given during the audition
 4. PREVIOUS EXHIBITION OF PLAYING ABILITY—as observed throughout the year
 5. BEHAVIOR—students should be portraying appropriate discipline and behavior at all times

STUDENTS MAY BE PROMOTED OR DEMOTED AT SEMESTER based on performance, reliability, citizenship, attitude, academic eligibility and the needs of the total band program.

Changes will occur based on the following:

- ♪ Audition results
- ♪ Sectional Attendance
- ♪ Performance Level & Participation
- ♪ Participation in any required function
- ♪ Tardiness/Citizenship/Effort
- ♪ Academic eligibility in all classes (keeping grades at 70 or higher)
- ♪ Proper respect towards directors or guest clinicians

♪ Appropriate behavior within a band function of any kind

It is a privilege, not a right, to be in Band. Placement is earned by past achievement, performance, commitment, attitude, and behavior. Each student is placed in a band by their ability level so they can successfully fulfill all of the required expectations and grow as a musician! It is each student's responsibility to maintain Band membership in good standing. Band is a fun & rewarding experience with life-long benefits. High expectations help to guide the promising futures of these young students.

Band Hall

The use of band facilities before, after and during school is a privilege. Students who abuse the facility will be disciplined accordingly. No loitering in the band hall. **“If you ain’t playing, you ain’t staying!”** Any abuse or damage will be considered vandalism. **No outside students are permitted in the band room**, except for business with the directors. There will be no horseplay, e.g., throwing things in or around the band room. All percussion equipment is off limits to anyone not specifically designated to use them. There will be no storing of personal items. Items left unattended will be donated to charity.

Supplies (all bands)

- ♪ Instrument in excellent working condition with the case labeled with name and band locker #
- ♪ A 1 inch, BLACK, three-ring binder (provided by the band- students will need to provide replacements if damaged or lost)
- ♪ Three Sharpened Pencils (regular or mechanical)—ready to use (provided by band- student replenish as needed)
- ♪ Blank notebook paper, at least 10 sheet protectors, & 3 highlighters (different colors) (students replenish as needed)
- ♪ Pencil Pouch- to hold pencils, highlighters, breathing tube, and other items needed
- ♪ Breathing Tube (provided by the band)- lost or damaged tubes may be replaced by once then through subsequent purchase through the band
- ♪ Any Band Music/Drills/Warm-Up/Scales/etc. given out by Director: placed in 3-ring binder with name on EVERY piece
- ♪ Band Books (instrument-specific):
 - ♪ Advanced Bands: Foundations of Superior Performance by Williams/King. (provided by the band)
 - ♪ Beginner Band: Essential Elements Interactive Book 1 (provided by the band)
- ♪ Woodwinds: 4 perfect reeds, maintenance/cleaning items, etc.
- ♪ Brass: maintenance/cleaning items, etc.
- ♪ Percussion: required sticks/mallets and stick bag- **clearly labeled**
- ♪ Advanced Bands: lyre & flip folder for instrument (optional)
- ♪ ALL BAND STUDENTS CAN FIND THE CURRENT SUPPLY LIST POSTED IN THE BAND HALL AND ON THE BAND WEBSITE (www.jmseagleband.org)

Uniform Information

Advanced Bands FORMAL Uniform (provided by the band):

- ♪ Formal Uniforms for Advanced Students include: black tuxedo pants and black dress shirt for boys and dresses for girls
- ♪ Formal Uniform Fee is included in the band fee collected at the beginning of the year. This will cover the cost of cleaning which NISD states must be done professionally. The replacement cost will be \$100 so students are reminded to treat them with the utmost care.
- ♪ Girls need to wear SOLID BLACK dress shoes & black hosiery and boys need to wear SOLID BLACK dress shoes & BLACK socks (crew length or longer).

Beginner Bands for ALL Performances and Advanced Bands for Casual Performances:

- ♪ Band T-shirt (ordered from Band Directors, included in band fee)
- ♪ Blue Jeans (No holes or rips)
- ♪ Shoes (NO CROCS or SLIDES)

School Owned Instruments

- ♪ School owned instruments are limited to the following: oboe, bassoon, bass clarinet, tenor sax, bari sax, French horn, baritone, and tuba. On rare occasions and based on financial need other instruments may be made available. Each student who uses a school owned instrument is completely responsible for the care of the instrument. All students who utilize school owned instruments will complete a School Owned Instrument Usage Form. If an instrument is damaged due to negligence, the student is responsible for the entire cost. Students assigned to a school owned instrument are encouraged to make the most of their investment and *in lieu of the cost of rental take private lessons*.

Eligibility

- ♪ All band members who earn a grade below 70 on a report card in any course may not participate in UIL, Region 29, and any other activities determined by campus and district administration. The student may become eligible again if they are passing all courses by the next progress report or report card. There will be a detailed eligibility timeline for the year posted in the Band Hall, and is available on the NISD website.
- ♪ Co-curricular functions, such as **concerts, rehearsals, and performances are a part of their academic grade for band and attendance is MANDATORY.** Eligibility does not affect curricular performances.
- ♪ Any student missing a performance for eligibility reasons must communicate with their director and complete an alternate assignment to make up the grade.

Daily Procedures

BEFORE SCHOOL:

- ♪ Band Hall will open at 7:30 a.m. daily *for band students attending sectionals* and 7:45 a.m. for students to put away items &/or practice.
- ♪ Instruments/Band Supplies should be brought to your Band Locker BEFORE SCHOOL. Those in athletics will be released to bring instruments following practice and prior to class.
- ♪ Morning Practice: Students with large instruments are encouraged to practice at school to eliminate having to move large instruments to and from school except for Fridays and returning Mondays. Practice begins at 7:45 a.m. and students will not be released from designated morning places to practice after 8:15 a.m. Students wishing to practice then attend tutorials will be permitted to leave at 8:00 a.m. Otherwise students will remain in the band hall till morning release at 8:33 a.m.

FOR BAND CLASS:

The basic expectation is that it is up to our students to make the Jefferson Eagle Band great...and thus may do nothing that interferes with the learning or the teaching of the Band!

- ♪ Except for Emergencies, students must use the restroom and get drinks BEFORE or AFTER class.
- ♪ Come immediately to the band hall and quickly get materials ready for class.

- ♪ You will be considered Tardy if you are not in the Band Hall by the Tardy Bell OR if you are not in your assigned seat with all supplies by 1 minute after the Tardy Bell.
- ♪ Instrument cases will be left IN YOUR LOCKER (not at your seat and not on the floor).
- ♪ Students who do not bring their instrument/supplies to class will have their rehearsal etiquette grade reduced, may be moved down a chair or to last chair, may be required to do a written assignment, and/or be assigned After School Band Detention. Parents or Guardians will be notified if a student is unable to participate in class due to missing supplies. Repeated offenses will result in disciplinary action.
- ♪ Proper rehearsal behavior is expected at all times to include being respectful to everyone, staying in your assigned seat until “Dismissed”, and raising your hand to speak.

AFTER SCHOOL:

- ♪ Students report to the Band Hall to pick up their instrument/binder to take home. Students in athletics will be permitted to get instruments prior to 8th period athletics/practice.
- ♪ Band Hall will be open until 4:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday for Band Students to practice, retest, attend required sectionals (advanced band).

Lockers

- ♪ Students will be issued a locker based on locker availability. The students are to use these lockers for instrument and band supply storage ONLY. In the case the student must share a locker, he/she will be assigned a dependable locker-mate.
- ♪ Students will be issued a school lock along with their locker. Combinations will be given to students on the first day that supplies need to be stored. NO PERSONAL LOCKS MAY BE USED
- ♪ Loss of a school lock will result in a \$15 lost lock fee and must be paid by the end of the year.
- ♪ The students are expected to USE THE LOCK which means securing their lock at all times (unless they are in the room, i.e. band period/morning-afternoon practice). *The student is responsible for remembering the combination and keeping it to his/herself.* Remember, the school is not liable for lost or stolen instruments.
- ♪ In the event that an instrument is missing, **the school is not liable for lost or stolen instruments.** The student should contact the band director immediately. The director will try to locate the instrument; however, if the instrument is not found, parents should take the necessary steps with their insurance company and report the mishap to the police ASAP. They will want to know the serial number (a unique # for that instrument) and make of the instrument. For school owned instruments we will have this information at school but you are encouraged to keep this information at home as well.

Practice Rooms

- ♪ Practice Rooms are for music students only (Band, Choir, and Orchestra) but **only** under a teacher's supervision. They are NOT available at all times.
- ♪ Only 2 people in a room at a time (unless permission from a director).
- ♪ ABSOLUTELY no Gum, Food, Candy, or Drinks in the Practice Rooms.
- ♪ Only students who are practicing music are allowed in the Practice Rooms.
- ♪ They are available for personal practice from 7:45-8:20 a.m. and 4:05-4:30 p.m. IF approved by a director or while in use for private lessons.

Instruments in Repair Shop/Student Unable to Play

- ♪ If sending an instrument off for repair a NOTE from a parent must be provided stating that the instrument has been sent for repair.
- ♪ ALWAYS keep your mouthpiece/reeds/supplies when your instrument is sent off. It's highly possible there is an instrument to borrow so that a student may still participate.

- ♪ Students are still expected to bring band supplies, especially band binder, to class.
- ♪ If a student is without an instrument OR if is physically unable to play, they are still required to finger along as the class plays so that they are not losing instruction.

Grading Policy

Grades will be determined by a combination of the following factors:

Playing Minutes/Practice Records/Practice Journals/Practice Assignments—i.e. practice OUTSIDE of normal band class & Rehearsal Etiquette Grades (Formative 50%)

A. Playing Minutes/Daily Practice Logs/Practice Journals

- ♪ All band students are required to make time **each day for practice outside of class**. Students who play larger instruments or might need to practice at school may do so beginning at 7:45 a.m. or until 4:30 p.m. in the band hall. Students needing special arrangements may speak to the Band Directors.

B. Weekly Rehearsal Etiquette Grades

- ♪ A weekly grade is entered for each student based on having working instruments in class (including working reeds, greases and oils for maintaining functional instruments).
- ♪ All students will receive a grade for daily participation. All band students should make sure they are prepared for class every day. All students are required to have the materials listed on the band webpage. Failure to meet rehearsal standards will result in a grade reduction.

C. Sectional Participation (Advanced Bands Only)

- ♪ All **Advanced Band Members** will have one (1) sectional a week through some of the school year. Sectionals will last for a maximum of one hour. They may take place before or after school, and times will be announced & calendars distributed & posted. **Beginning band members** will most likely not have sectionals outside of the school day.

D. After-School Rehearsal Participation

- ♪ *Advanced band members* will have full band before/after-school rehearsals throughout the year as deemed necessary. *Beginning band members* will have 2-4 after-school rehearsals a year right before each Concert time.

E. Concert/Contest Participation

- ♪ All concerts/performances are mandatory. Missing a concert or other performance will result in a zero. Punctuality, uniform, and performance etiquette are part of the grade. If a student is ineligible for a CONTEST, they will have a written/performance assignment to make up for that grade opportunity.

F. Audience Participation/Etiquette

- ♪ All Band Members will be given a grade for staying for the entire concert and exhibiting correct concert etiquette (whether a performer or an audience member).

G. Proper Performance Attire

- ♪ The proper **uniform attire** for ALL Concerts/Performances is required and will be reflected in their concert grade.

****Absences & School Related Schedule Conflicts****

Directors will inform Jefferson faculty and coaches about extra rehearsals and sectionals. Schedules will be passed out. Sectionals are a major part of the grade, and will also be a factor in determining chair placement. Missed sectionals, after-school rehearsals, concerts, and contests cannot be made up for full credit unless prior arrangements made or due to illness/absence from school. State approved absences will be excused. Parent communication to the directors to let them know the reason for the missed sectional, after-school rehearsal, concert, or contest is necessary to ensure grades and missed instruction are handled correctly. If the student is going to be at school for the day, then they need to be at the sectional, after-school rehearsal, concert or contest. On the other hand, the student is automatically

excused from these events if he/she is absent from school that day.

Test Grades (Summative 50%)

A. Weekly Testing

- ♪ Most major tests will be done either during class, recording during class, or in sectionals. Test results are a major grade and will also be a factor in determining chair placement. Students may re-take any test within that current grading period. Re-testing will occur before or after school, or at the director's convenience, but will not count for chair positions. Re-testing is encouraged as the purpose of band participation is to improve and scores should reflect this improvement.
- ♪ Criteria for most playing tests are based on performance in five areas: Tone, Rhythm, Note Accuracy, Articulation, and Posture.
- ♪ If a student is ABSENT the day of a test, he/she will sit at the end of the section until the next chair test. He/she will arrange a time with a band director to make up the GRADE or it will become a zero at the end of the grading period.

B. Performances & Rehearsals

- ♪ All concerts/performances are mandatory. Missing a concert or other performance will result in a zero summative grade. Punctuality, uniform, behavior, and having all materials are part of the grade. If a student is ineligible for a CONTEST, they will have a written/performance assignment to make up for that grade.
- ♪ Mandatory Rehearsals listed on the calendar are counted as major grades. Failure to attend mandatory rehearsals can result in a summative grade of zero. Communication from parents is required detailing the reason for absence and to make arrangements to make up the missing grades.

Practice Guidelines for Parents & Students

A student's progress in band will depend greatly on what is achieved during daily practice sessions. Learning takes place in school, but proficiency is gained at home. The following guidelines help maintain a healthy practice routine.

As with any activity, you get out of it what you put into it. Band will not be fun unless you play to build skills. There are many values in the study of music as a discipline that transfers to other areas of life.

Guidelines for Practice Success:

- Pick a set time each day- this helps establish routine and makes it more likely to happen.
- Begin with breathing exercises- use the breathing tube!
- Use a metronome with headphones (or loud enough to hear) at every practice session.
- Use a tuner for a portion of your practice session
- Have a non-boomy place to practice- be able to hear yourself while practicing
- Use your Practice Journal or Playing Time Sheet to guide practice
- Use our daily warm-ups and think "tone"
- Increase endurance (15 minutes of full-tone playing)

- Play some form of scales at every practice session
- Increase dynamic range (work on *pianissimo*)
- Increase range (highest note with good tone)
- Work on technique (quick fingers, articulations, accents, etc.)
- “I will start with ____ minutes and increase to ____.”
- **Play something fun!!**
- Practice sight-reading
- **Take a break every 20 minutes** - tired practice develops bad habits

Climate: Practicing should be done in an area that is free from distractions away from the television, radio, and family traffic. Good lighting, a straight-backed chair, mirror, metronome, and a music stand are definite assets. Reed players should have several reeds available during the practice session.

Encouragement: Parents- spend some time listening to your youngster practice. Just having someone listening can be incentive enough for students to practice. Parents can offer constructive criticism. You do not need to be a former band member or musician to be able to hear improvement. Encourage them to play assignments and tests for you. Each time the student plays for a friend or relative helps them to feel more comfortable with a public performance or competitive event.

Playing Card/Journal Guidelines:

- ♪ Band has outside school work everyday- but it's the fun kind! Music Making!
- ♪ Outside of class playing times **MUST** be spread out throughout the week. A student is learning little and will only experience frustration when “cramming” practice minutes into less than 6 days a week.
- ♪ Students will turn in the Playing Minutes for a grade **each week**.
- ♪ Minutes for the week must be entered by Sunday and a parent signature and total completed to turn in for full credit on the first day of the week.
- ♪ A Zero will be given for Minutes not turned in.
- ♪ Failure to fill out the times correctly, missing signatures, and insufficient time will result in a reduction in grade.
- ♪ Keep track of time in exact minutes and record the weekly totals in MINUTES not hours. (Example: 180 minutes, not 3 hours.)
- ♪ Concerts, Rehearsals, Sectionals, and Private Lessons can be counted as 30 minutes of playing time for that day, regardless of the actual length of the activity.
- ♪ Extra credit will be given for students who obtain more than the required minutes.
- ♪ *Exceptions will only be made by the band director(s)* for illness, instrument in the repair shop, a family crisis, or other unusual circumstances. Notification in writing must accompany the playing time when turned in.

Region Band & Region Orchestra- expected of Honor Band Members

All Advanced Band members are strongly encouraged to audition for acceptance into the Region 29 Middle School Band with the top chairs receiving placement in the Region Orchestra. Details about Region Band auditions and music will be provided during their full band class. Visit www.jmseagleband.org for more details about Region Band.

Solo and Ensemble

All band members are required to participate in solo and ensemble contest (Advanced=January; Beginners=April/May). Students will be required to perform a solo, and Advanced students may also have the opportunity to perform an ensemble with 3 or more people.

Private Lessons

Private lessons are highly recommended and encouraged. Although in class band instruction is our expertise, there is no substitute for additional one-on-one instruction by a professional on that individual's instrument. Private lessons are a key ingredient to individual and program success. Much like physical training, instrumental training can be enhanced greatly and success more rapid through personal training. Please consider private lessons. Visit www.jmseagleband.org for information on current district approved private instructions.

End of Year Celebration

- ♪ Students will be invited to participate in an End of Year Celebration. In the past, we have gone to Dave & Buster's.
- ♪ The End of Year Celebration is for students who have completed the school year in good standing with the Band and JMS. This is left completely to the discretion of the band directors and the JMS Administration as to a student's invitation to this event.

Guidelines for Students Who Are Waiting for Rides After Band Events

- ♪ When students are staying after school for Band Events (rehearsals, sectionals, concerts), parents are always informed in advance through a handout sent home and posted on the band webpages. Parents need to make EVERY EFFORT to pick up their child or arrange for the student to have a ride at the announced dismissal time. Students who are walking should begin walking immediately following the event.
- ♪ Students are requested to use one of the Band Hall telephones if needed. Students should NOT use the JMS front office phone.
- ♪ Parents should pick up the student by the front of the school. Students who are waiting will be instructed to call to find out the status of their ride. Students should not roam around the school.
- ♪ Students remaining excessively late following an event could result in exclusion from future after school events (both band related and other).

JMS Band Boosters

Parents of JMS Band students are automatically members of the JMS Band Boosters. This group is the most important support for the band programs success! Parents and family members are encouraged, invited, and NEEDED to volunteer for the board and at various events for the JMS Band. The JMS Band Booster Board meets each year and provides all needed support for the JMS Band students. The JMS Band Boosters also participate in various fundraisers throughout the year to support the activities and instruction of JMS Band students. Visit www.jmseagleband.org to find out more about the JMS Band Boosters. If you're not an NISD employee, please make sure you complete an NISD VOLUNTEER BACKGROUND CHECK to be allowed to participate and volunteer for any band related events. Go to www.nisd.net and follow the links to VOLUNTEER BACKGROUND CHECK.

Welcome to the JMS Band Family!

The guidelines in this book are in place to make sure we all get everything we can out of Band and that the time and financial investments being made are protected and nurtured.

Welcome to one of the most exciting experiences in which you can be a part---THE BAND! Now, more than ever, we have information to justify why we participate in this demanding, yet rewarding activity. Experts have concluded that the study of music helps with spatial reasoning, test taking, and overall quality of life!

Factor in social skills, emotional development, leadership training, group interaction, aesthetic perception, music-making, and the discipline of being part of a band program, and it is clear why someone would want to be involved in a successful band program like the one at Wallace B. Jefferson Middle School! Welcome, we're glad you're here!

The JMS Band Directors