**MISSOURI CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**PERFORMING BAND**

**HANDBOOK**

**Updated July 11, 2022**

This handbook contains important information for both students and parents. Please take time to read each page carefully together, and to keep for reference throughout the school year. **Sign and return the last page**.

**PHILOSOPHY**

The study and performance of music is an opportunity that young people of today truly need! It is our goal to make professional musicians of our students, and to enable them to enjoy the life-long benefits of music. Recent studies prove that students who participate in music are among the academically strongest in their schools. The skills learned through a successful experience in a school band program – self-discipline, increased self-esteem, time management, commitment, responsibility, and teamwork - will be reflected in a successful adult life. The opportunity to enjoy a new level of communication and self-expression is the goal for every young musician. Creativity is within all of us, and the language of music serves as a perfect vehicle to allow this personal growth and development.

**COMMITMENT TO THE BAND SCHEDULE**

Band activities are group events that require the participation of all students. Like the spokes on a wheel, all student are very important to the group. Trying to rehearse or perform without all band members is similar to playing the piano with keys missing. We need and expect students to attend rehearsals and performances. We schedule our events around other school activities to allow students the opportunity to be part of many organizations. Occasionally, however, band events may conflict with another Missouri City Middle School event. In that case, the directors/sponsors of both groups will work with the parents and students so that the students and groups best interests are met. A yearly event calendar is published at the beginning of the school year. We ask that you mark your calendars with these events so that you can avoid these dates when planning family activities and other non-school related events.

**BAND CLASSES**

**Honor Band**

The Honor Band is an advanced performing group with preparation for the high school band program as a primary objective. Students in this group will perform at concerts and contests throughout the school year, as well as have the opportunity to perform at solo and ensemble contests (provided they meet academic eligibility requirements). Students are selected by auditions held at the end of the previous school year. Instrumentation is limited to those who show advanced performance abilities and superior attitudes.

**Symphonic Band**

The Symphonic Band is an advanced performing group with preparation for Symphonic Band and the high school band program as primary objectives. Students in this group will perform at concerts and contests throughout the school year, as well as have the opportunity to perform at solo and ensemble contests (provided they meet academic eligibility requirements). Members are selected by audition (which are held at the end of the previous school year). Instrumentation is limited to those with appropriate performance abilities and superior attitudes.

**Concert Band**

The Concert Band is a performing group designed to foster musical growth of its members, while preparing students for Honors Band, Symphonic Band and the high school band program as it objectives. Students in this group will perform at concerts and contests throughout the school year, as well as have the opportunity to perform at solo and ensemble contests (provided they meet academic eligibility requirements). Members are selected by audition (which are held at the end of the previous school year).

**Beginning Band**

The Beginning Band is comprised of like-instrument classes, with developing a solid foundation on the instrument as its objective. No prior musical knowledge or training is necessary to be in the Beginning Band. All students must meet with a band director to discuss instrument choices before being placed in the Beginning Band.

**ATTENDANCE AND GRADING POLICY**

**Performances and Tests \*\***

* Attendance and participation in performances and clinics
* Playing and written tests over pre-assigned material

**Participation, Quizzes and Daily Grades\***

* Active participation in class and after-school rehearsals with all necessary equipment
* Daily playing and written assignments

**Weekly practice records**

* Students are responsible for turning in weekly practice records.
* All sectionals are a **major** grade
* All band performances are a **double** major grade

An **unexcused absence** from a required rehearsal or performance may result in the suspension of that student from any other extra-curricular band activities for the remainder of the school year, removal from the performing band, and/or demotion within the particular section. **The student's band grade will be affected.** The band directors and principal will be responsible for determining the penalty to be assessed. Students who have an **excused** **absence** from a rehearsal or performance will be given an appropriate make-up assignment. **Students can be excused from a performance only after interactive contact between the director and parent PRIOR to the event**. **The band director is the only individual who can determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused**. Absences must be excused at least 24 hours before a sectional and 2 weeks before a performance.

**AFTER-SCHOOL REHEARSALS**

Regular sectionrehearsals are at the heart of every successful band program. Section rehearsals provide students the individual and small group specialized instruction that they cannot receive during full band rehearsal. We will be strengthening individual instrumental fundamentals and working on a variety of performance techniques and music.

Honor, Symphonic, and Concert Band students are required to attend one after-school section rehearsal per week throughout the school year. Students attending section rehearsals will earn a weekly section rehearsal grade based on major playing test and/or participation. Students who miss sectionals for an unexcused reason will receive a major playing test grade and/or participation grade of **zero**. Failure to attend section rehearsals can also result in removal from the performing band.

The section rehearsal schedule will be coordinated with the MCMS Athletic Department so that band athletes may attend required sectionals on the scheduled day and time. Any student absent from school on a sectional day must re-schedule with one of the directors for a make-up time. Other absences excused by the directors may also be re-scheduled. It is our goal that all students receive the required help necessary to become better musicians.

From time to time (mostly in the spring semester), the band will schedule full band after-school rehearsals. The purpose of these additional rehearsals is to bring in guest clinicians to work the band in a more productive setting than the typical 45-minute class period will allow. We will publish these dates, specific for each performing band, in advance via handout/email and the band webpage on CHARMS.

**AT-HOME PRACTICE**

Playing a musical instrument is an acquired skill; therefore, developing wholesome practice habits is essential. With appropriate practice habits, band will be a successful and gratifying experience. ***Parent support and guidance* will be key factors in establishing a regular practice schedule insuring the attainment of musical goals**. The most effective home rehearsal program operates on a daily half-hour basis dedicated to quality practice. Some ways that parents can help their children include:

* Decide with your child the best time and place where they should practice. This place should be quiet and free from distractions.
* Make sure that your child has a sturdy chair (that does not swivel) and a music stand in the practice area. Having these materials will help promote good posture, good instrument carriage, and essential skills in playing the instrument well.
* Monitor student practice and give positive reinforcement. This is the single most effective communication that a parent and other family members can share in this quest.

**Home practice is expected!** The physical requirements of producing a quality sound, playing with clean technical accuracy and the reading of music notation will strengthen over time only if daily practice occurs. **No instrument should spend the night in the band hall**.

Students will receive a practice record for every week. The student will fill out the practice record daily. A parent or guardian will sign at the end of each week confirming that the listed practice is accurate. The student will turn in the practice record each week.

**ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY**

Most of the work that our students do is curricular and is not subject to eligibility restrictions. Curricular band activities include free concerts, section rehearsals, full-band rehearsals and private lessons. **Being eligible is the expectation for all members of the Honor, Symphonic, and Concert Bands**. *Consistent ineligibility might result in a student’s removal from the ensemble.*

Activities such as an event where admission is charged, an event that is inter-school competitive or an event where ratings are awarded are subject to eligibility restrictions. For students to participate in these extra-curricular activities, they must meet TEA (Texas Education Association) and UIL (University Interscholastic League) eligibility requirements.

\****Due to it being a state evaluation, UIL Concert and Sight Reading Contest is not subject to eligibility.***

Students who fail any one class at the end of a grading period will become ineligible as determined by the eligibility schedule. Ineligible students can regain eligibility at the three-week progress report period provided the teacher determines the student is passing all classes. Semester grades will not effect eligibility. A student who receives an “I” (incomplete) will also be considered ineligible. Students have a minimal time to clear an incomplete to regain eligibility.

For more information regarding eligibility for extra-curricular activities, contact the band directors. You can also check out the “UIL-TEA Side by Side” on the web:

<http://www.uiltexas.org/policy/tea-uil-side-by-side>

**PRIVATE LESSON PROGRAM**

The special attention of a private study plan gives the student confidence and a more thorough understanding of the instrument. The private lesson curriculum rapidly advances the individual student. The instructors we recommend are highly qualified professional musicians who are carefully screened at both the district and campus levels before they are hired. Lessons are once a week, after school, for thirty minutes. Tuition fees for lessons held at a FBISD school are between $20 and $25, as determined by the FBISD Fine Arts office. Parents and students are expected to follow the FBISD Private Lesson Program Guidelines which are sent from the Fine Arts Office after enrollment. Private lessons are designed to benefit all band students - students having any difficulties with fundamentals can receive the extra attention and tutoring needed to become successful. Students already performing well will gain great strength from the advanced pace and more challenging material the lesson teacher can provide. The benefit of private lessons is invaluable to all students' musical progress. Students receive weekly "one-on-one" attention that is not possible in a large band class. They learn more about their instrument, are challenged further, and tend to gain immense self-confidence from the private lesson experience.

We encourage you to take advantage of this outstanding program. To enroll in private lessons, fill out the Private Lesson Application that is distributed at the beginning of the school year or contact a band director.

**UNIFORM**

Performing band members have two uniforms: a “formal” uniform and an “informal” uniform.

**Formal Uniform (students are responsible for supplying all the parts of their formal uniform as outlined below)**

The formal uniform is worn at most concerts and contests and on band picture day. At contests, bands are graded on the uniformity of dress. It is essential for all students to be dressed appropriately. **Any student not in the proper uniform will not be allowed to perform.**

• Plain black dress shirt with collar for bow tie; long sleeve

• Black dress pants with black belt

• Long solid black dress socks

• Solid black dress shoes

• Tie – provided by the band dept.

For your convenience, the tie will be passed out prior to a concert/contest, and then collected immediately afterwards. Lost or damaged ties are replaced by the student. It is the responsibility of the parents to provide the black shoes, black socks, and black belt. Black tennis shoes are **NOT** allowed.

**Informal Uniform**

The informal uniform is worn at special school functions and social events. When wearing the band t-shirt in conjunction with a performance, the t-shirt is always to be tucked in.

• MCMS band t-shirt (new design each year) – purchased through the band dept.

• Blue jeans or Khaki pants as designated by the director

• Tennis shoes

The purpose of a uniform is for everyone in the band to look as similar as possible so the listeners are not visually distracted from the performance. Accessories should be kept to a minimum. Hair should be natural in color and groomed in a way that is not visually distracting. If a student is unsure about either, please see your band director prior to the performance for guidance.

**REGION BAND AUDITIONS**

All students in Honor Band and select students in Symphonic and Concert Band will participate in the Region Band Audition process.

Students will compete in individual competition against other students within music Region XIII for a highly select musical organization. Those who earn placement in the Region Band (which is like an all-star team of musicians) will participate in a weekend clinic/concert with a well-known area conductor.

The fee for Region Band/Orchestra Auditions should be paid 35 days prior to the audition so that a student can be entered into the competition. Once a student has entered the competition, audition fees **will not be refunded** for students who become ineligible or do not attend the contest. **We recommend paying all band fees during the fall semester.**

Music and audition requirements will be announced at the beginning of the school year.

**SOLO AND ENSEMBLE CONTEST**

All students in Honor Band, Symphonic Band and Concert Band will participate in the FBISD Middle School Solo and Ensemble Contest. Students who take private lessons will select and prepare a solo with their lesson teacher. Students who do not take private lessons will be assigned a solo by the band director. The solo will be on a level that the student will be able to learn mostly on their own. Students may also participate in the ensemble portion of the contest. Directors will place students into groups (trios, quartets, etc.) based upon specific instrumentation and student abilities. Directors will schedule rehearsals to help prepare ensemble groups for performance.

Entry fees ($10.00 for each student, per event) must be paid 35 school days prior to the contest. Once a student has entered the competition, **contest fees cannot be refunded** for students who become ineligible or do not attend the contest. **We recommend paying all band fees during the fall semester.**

Solo and ensemble music performed must be listed in the current Texas UIL Prescribed Music List, and is broadly categorized into three levels of difficulty.

* Class III - medium-easy (suitable for most middle school students)
* Class II - medium-difficult (suitable for advanced middle school and high school students)
* Class I - difficult (suitable for very advanced middle school and high school students)

Students performing a solo are **required to perform with a piano accompaniment**. Some students may arrange to be accompanied by their private teacher or other capable pianist. We will assign an accompanist. For a fee of $30.00, the accompanist will rehearse at least twice with the student and perform at the contest (percussion solos do not usually use piano accompaniment, although some mallet solos do). Students who rehearse with the accompanist and then do not attend the contest (for any reason) will still owe this for the contracted services.

**UIL CONCERT AND SIGHT-READING CONTEST**

Every spring, bands perform at the UIL Concert and Sight-reading evaluation. Unlike most “competitions”, bands will be judged according to a standard of state mandated musical fundamentals rather than against other bands. The evaluation is divided into two parts. For the “concert” portion, bands must perform three pieces of music, two of which must come from the “Prescribed Music List” (PML). For the “sightreading” portion, the band is required to perform a piece of music which they have neither seen or heard. The band director gets a limited amount of time to discuss the music with the students. Judges will listen to both portions of the contest and award a rating:

* First division: Superior - I
* Second division: Excellent - II
* Third division: Average - III
* Forth division: Below Average - IV
* Fifth division: Poor – V

**PERSONAL PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT**

Fort Bend ISD does not provide insurance for individually-owned equipment. Some insurance companies allow you to purchase an additional or “rider” policy to cover musical instruments. These policies are usually inexpensive and are more than sufficient. Separate musical instrument insurance can be obtained through Music Agency, Inc. For more information, check out their website at [www.musicagencyinc.com](http://www.musicagencyinc.com).

Students will have a place within the band hall to store their instrument and music binder during the school day. It is the responsibility of each student to place his or her instrument in the assigned location each morning and to take it home after school. Many instrument cases look the same, so students are required to clearly label the instrument with their name on the outside of the case. This can easily be done with an inexpensive luggage tag.

**STEP-UP INSTRUMENTS**

In most cases, beginner instruments are adequate for junior high bands; however, better quality instruments enable students to learn more quickly and with greater ease. There are many brands and models of more-professional quality instruments. To get more information on instruments recommended by the MCMS Band, contact a band director.

**USE OF SCHOOL-OWNED INSTRUMENTS**

Students who play a school-owned instrument will pay a maintenance fee of $80 ***per instrument*** per school year. This fee covers normal wear-and-tear and upkeep of the instrument. **This fee does not cover negligence or misuse in which the student, parent or guardian will be responsible for the cost of repair and/or replacement if damage is beyond repair.** A Maintenance/Usage Form will be sent home at the beginning of the school year detailing this information. Percussion students in performing bands will also pay an $80 maintenance fee that will cover the cost of equipment repair and maintenance. **Students on free or reduced lunch will not pay the $80 fee for school instrument use.**

**BAND CODE OF CONDUCT**

The success of all band classes is determined by individual and group efforts. The discipline required to achieve this success must be of the highest standard. Band classes at MCMS are conducted in a very positive, motivating manner in which all students have the opportunity to become successful. **Appropriate student behavior is required at all times!** Fort Bend ISD discipline management code, dress code, and bus rules apply on all trips – MCMS Band members are required to be respectful to bus drivers and sponsors. Poor conduct by a MCMS Band member during rehearsals, band functions or trips may result in the suspension of that individual from extra-curricular band activities for the remainder of school year, and possible dismissal from the band program. The directors reserve the right to make these decisions.

**MEDICAL INFORMATION**

Each student must have a current medical form on file when traveling with the band. These forms accompany the band when the band travels to any off-campus event.

**TRAVEL**

Fort Bend ISD policy states that all students are required to ride to and from school sponsored activities in District-provided transportation. An exception may be granted for a student to be released to the custody of his/her parent at the completion of the activity if a **written request is received and approved prior to the trip.** A written note must be submitted in advance if your child will not be riding District-provided transportation from this band event. Students can only be released to his/her parent or guardian. **Relatives, siblings, neighbors, etc. may not take your son/daughter home early from a band trip**. Parents may be asked to show a photo ID to the band directors and/or chaperones, if necessary, before a student is released, and will have to "sign out" the student with the director.

**BRACES**

**Woodwind and Brass players only** - If there are plans for braces or other orthodontics, please be mindful of the timing involved in getting them. Braces are a fact of life for many students. It does take some time to get used to playing your instrument with braces, and, for this reason, we ask that you kindly consider not getting them put on or removed **in close proximity to major performances and competitions**. Please contact a band director if you have any questions regarding braces and the band calendar. If a student does get braces, rest assure that they will continue to enjoy the same level of success that they had before braces once the initial period of adjustment has passed.

**BAND FEES**

The following fees are broken down by performing group. Fees can be paid at one time or in $10 payments. **These fees are not refundable**.

**Honor Band Fees:** $60 – This will cover the band t-shirt; entry fees for the Region-Band Audition and Solo/Ensemble Contest; $30 fee for their accompanist at contest; and $?? for Spring festival performance.

**Symphonic and Concert Band Fees:** $50 – This covers the band t-shirt; entry fee for Solo/Ensemble Contest; $30 fee for their accompanist at contest; $?? for Spring festival performance. *Note 1*: Some students may also need to pay an additional $10 if they enter the Region-Band Audition.

**Beginner Band Fees:** $10 – This covers the band t-shirt which will be needed for any band field trips and the first band concert in December; $?? for Spring festival performance.

\*During the course of the school year we will usually go on field trips that can incur additional costs\*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | T-Shirt | Region | Solo/Ens | Piano Acc. |  | Total |
| Honor Band | $10 | $10 | $10 | $30 |  | $60 |
| Sym/Con Band | $10 |  | $10 | $30 |  | $50 |
| Beg. Band | $10 |  |  |  |  | $10 |

**SPRING TRIP/FESTIVAL**

We would like to take a Spring field trip to a local festival, and to go to a place of recreation like Main Event, Dave and Buster’s, etc. Possible cost is $??. This fee is not included in the regular fees.

**FUNDRAISING**

The MCMS Band may or may not do an official fundraiser. However, we will collect our regular band fees through **regular payments and monthly installments.**

**PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

Parents, we need your help! From chaperoning a band function to coordinating an event, no task is too small. Please be aware that to help out on campus or on a band trip you must complete the online background check. A parent volunteer letter will go home at the beginning of the year where you can indicate your areas of interest. Thanks in advance for your support and willingness to help the Missouri City Middle School Band program.

**BAND WEBPAGE**

For the most up-to-date information for the MCMS Band, please refer to the Charms Webpage. News, handouts and current calendar information will be available. Visit the MCMS Band Webpage at <http://www.charmsoffice.com>. Click on the log-on button and use the school code “MoCityBand”. First time users will need to use their student ID to log on.

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

We believe that band is seven-year process that teaches discipline, responsibility, individual achievement, team spirit, and an appreciation for music that will continue throughout middle school, high school and into adult life. We believe that open communication between students, parents and directors is critical in achieving our common goal of student success. If you ever have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to working with you and your child this year. Thank you for your support!

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**MCMS Handbook Signature Page**

*In an effort to “Go Green”, the band handbook is available on the MCMS Band CHARMS webpage and the Schoology website for each band course. Please refer to the band webpage for many student and parent resources throughout the year.*

<http://www.charmsoffice.com> School code: “MoCityBand”

<http://fortbendisd.schoology.com>

We have read the Missouri City Middle School Band Handbook and are aware of all components, including, but not limited to, the following:

• Grading procedures for MCMS Band.

• Responsibility for informing directors within a reasonable amount of time when conflicts arise that might prevent my child from being present at a required event.

• Students are required to attend all after-school rehearsals as outlined in the master calendar and in detailed calendars sent home throughout the year, and failure to do so will negatively affect the student’s grade and could ultimately jeopardize the student’s future band placement and/or participation in ALL activities.

• What constitutes an excused absence from a required band event.

• I recognize the necessity of quality practice in order to be successful as a musician and to fulfill my obligation to my peers within my ensemble.

• I understand academic eligibility requirements and the consequences for not maintaining passing grades in all classes.

• I understand the importance in the timing of getting or removing of braces as it relates to the proximity of performances.

Student Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Period\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Parent Cell # \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Parent Email \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_