

*Sharyland Beginner Band
Parent-Student Handbook
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SHARYLAND BAND DEPARTMENT BEGINNER BAND HANDBOOK

The Sharyland Band program is designed to promote and encourage students with a desire to learn and enjoy music. This is done through a quality instructional and co-curricular experience. The “Band Experience” enriches students’ lives in many ways, and often for years to come after high school graduation. Their self-discipline, social and communication skills, self-concept, cooperative talents and creative mind will all be nurtured through their study of music.

We know that band students typically enjoy a successful high school career, go on to college, and become leaders in our society. Research has proven that learning a musical instrument makes a positive impact on grade point average (GPA), as well as, standardized test scores such as TAKS and college entrance exams. In fact, recent research has shown that students who are in band will score an average of 34% higher on standardized exams!!! The researchers in California that gave us the “learning styles” research several years ago are currently leading out in the research of the effects of music on the brain and learning. Their findings are phenomenal. When you learn to play an instrument, you literally produce more brain cells in the portion of the brain that allows the right and left half of the brain to work together. This allows students to process information quicker and with greater reliability. This is especially true, the research has shown, in technical areas of study such as math, science and computers. For many students, band may provide scholarship help for college, even if the student does not major in music.

The band, just like any other team, has expectations that must be met in order for the “team” to be successful. In accordance with TEA guidelines (it is literally the law), a student must have a grade of 70 or above to participate in extracurricular activities and performances (concerts may be considered co-curricular if not competitive in nature). Students who consistently fail an academic course, do not participate in required extra-curricular activities, or do not exhibit a willingness to excel could be removed from the program.

If your student is to be successful, we expect that you and he/she will comply with the guidelines presented in this handbook. The policies contained in this handbook pertain to all band members during class time, rehearsals and performances, or anytime in which the band member represents or is identified with the Sharyland Band.

Every student is important to the success of the band’s performance and appearance. Dedication and responsibility will make a band of which we can be proud.

PARENTS:

Read this handbook carefully with your child.

Please sign and return the attached Acknowledgement form located at the end of this handbook.

GENERAL RULES

All school district policies found in the student's elementary school Parent-Student Handbook shall be in effect and penalties shall be consistent with the handbook unless otherwise indicated.

1. Each student is to respect and care for school-owned equipment and facilities as he/she would their own. Any carelessness, neglect, or abuse of school equipment will not be tolerated. If this kind of behavior occurs, the result will be a parent/teacher conference and/or report to the assistant principal's office at the discretion of the director. Defacing or destroying school property or any items associated with the band program will also result in payment for damages.
2. No food, candy, gum or drinks will be allowed when the band is rehearsing. Please do not bring these items to band class.
3. Only band students (and other music students) shall be allowed in the band class. This is for the protection of both school and personal property.
4. Foul or disrespectful language is not acceptable at any time.
5. Students will have their names on the outside of their instrument cases by means of either labels, engraving or permanent marker. Percussionists must label all of their equipment, including sticks and mallets.
6. Students will not disturb anyone who is teaching. Just like the classroom, if you have a question, raise your hand and wait patiently until the teacher recognizes you.
7. Do not touch any instrument except your own.
8. Do not play your instrument without permission.

BAND CLASS RULES

1. Bring all materials to class. This includes: instrument, binder, book, and **pencil**. All band members will need a 1-11/2 inch three-ring binder to keep music and handouts.
2. Students need to enter the rehearsal room quietly and orderly. Be seated quickly and quietly and be ready to follow instructions. Students will also put up equipment and line up and exit the room in a quiet orderly manner.
3. Respect and be polite to all people.
4. Do not talk or leave your seat without permission.
5. Respect other people's property.

POSSIBLE STUDENT CONSEQUENCES

1. Warning
2. Isolation
3. Isolation, Extra Work, Parent Conference
4. Parent Conference/Principal's Office with the possibility of removal from the band program.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

1. Students need to attend and be on time for all rehearsals and performances throughout the school year.
2. "Perfect practice makes perfect!" Every band student is required to practice 30-40 minutes per day on his/her instrument. Practice cards will be required each week (see Practice & Grading Policies, pg. 5). The band will only progress as far as each individual student progresses. If you as a parent do not hear daily practice, the chances of satisfactory progress are small. This practice time is the homework assignment for band class.
3. Each student must have all necessary equipment at every rehearsal and performance. Regular checks of these requirements will be made by the director, and failure to have these items will effect the student's participation grade for that week (see Grading Policies, pg. 5).
4. Students are responsible to be at all rehearsals and performances. If a conflict arises, the band director needs to be informed in advance.

EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

1. Every parent should help their child find practice time at home. If the parent is not hearing an instrument played at home, the chances are not very good that the student is learning assignments.
2. Please do not prohibit your son or daughter's participation in band activities such as lessons, performances, etc. This detracts from the band's progress. Every student is essential for our success, so they all need to be present for rehearsals and performances.

The band directors do like to hear from parents. Feel free to communicate with the band staff. If you have a problem, don't worry about it alone. We do not have all the answers, but most times we can help. You can reach us by telephone at 580-5333, EXT. 1798. Also, check the B.L. Gray Band web site at <http://www.sharylandisd.org>. Look under Beginner Band Lower left hand side.

DISTRICT-LEVEL GUIDELINES FOR BAND

The following guidelines have been set-up at the district level. They are the equivalent of the district section of the Student/Parent handbook / student code of conduct for Sharyland ISD.

1. Band Registration Guidelines
 - a. Registration in band is contingent on a completed registration form. This form assures us that parents approve of their child's enrollment in band. Students may enroll in band anytime prior to required instrument date, see 2a (with principal and band director approval). After the end of the 1st three weeks, enrollment in band is at the discretion of both band director and school principal.
 - b. Students transferring from other districts or schools that were enrolled in band at previous campus will be allowed in band provided they have the proper equipment and materials.
 - c. Students transferring from other districts or schools with no prior band experience after the deadline to get instruments must get private instruction from an outside source, at the cost of the parent, to catch up on the instruction covered to that date. And then the student will be required to audition for a chair.
2. Instruments
 - a. Students are required to have an instrument and book by the date set by the band directors. For the 2016-17 school year, this date will be **Wednesday, September 7th**. Students that are using school-owned instruments are required to purchase an instrument accessory pack by this date. Failure to have materials by this date will result in removal from the band program.
 - b. Students that are unable to afford to rent an instrument may choose to play a school-owned instrument (bassoon, french horn, baritone, or tuba). The parent must still provide the disposables (mouthpiece or reeds, book, cleaning supplies) for this instrument by the specified date.
3. Band Schedule Drops
 - a. Students will be allowed to drop the band class with a signed parent note at the end of the 1st semester **with director and principal approval**. This is the only times during the year that a student may choose to drop band.
 - b. Extenuating circumstances can arise that may allow for a student to drop the class at other times during the year. These can be reviewed on a student-by-student basis by the band director and principal.
4. Repercussions for excessive disruption of class
 - a. Band is a privilege, not a right. If a student proves that he/she is unable to control their behavior in a band setting, the band director needs to have the option of referring the student to the office with the understanding that there will be a penalty reflecting those outlined in the SISD Student/Parent handbook.
 - b. Band directors have the option of sending students to the office without a referral. These students will be held for discipline pending a referral at the end of class
 - c. Excessive numbers of referrals may result in removal from the band program.
5. Penalty for missing instruments
 - a. This applies to students that have an instrument and choose to not bring their instrument to class. It does not apply to instruments under repair or the "grace period" for instrument purchase at the beginning of the year.
 - b. Offenses
 - i. First Offense – Student will be permitted to remain in classroom.
 - ii. Second Offense – Student will be subject to discipline from the Band Director, but will remain in the classroom.
 - iii. Third (and each subsequent) Offense – Student will be referred to the office for discipline. The consequences of these offenses will be determined by the campus principal, and could include removal from the band program.
 - c. The count of missing instruments would "re-set" each semester.

SUPPLIES

To be a positive, contributing member of the band, each student needs to maintain certain supplies for their instrument. The supplies listed below are available at any music store. Inspections for these items will be held periodically, and counted as a test grade.

1. All band students will need a 1 to 1-1/2 inch 3 ring binder. This should only contain band handouts, including music, scale sheets, warm-ups, this handbook, and any other materials distributed by the band director.
2. A sharpened **pencil** with an eraser must be brought to class every day. Pens are not acceptable.
3. All instrument cases **MUST** be clearly labeled on the outside of the case with the student's name and campus. This includes school-issued instruments.

Flutes: cleaning rod and rag, and pencil. Inspections will include polishing and checking to make certain all pads are in good condition and closing completely.

Clarinets: 4 Vandoren or Vandoren V-12 size 2 1/2 reeds (reeds must be unbroken — **NO** Rico or Grand Concert reeds), reed holder, cleaning swab, mouthpiece cap and ligature, mouthpiece brush, cork grease, and pencil. Inspections will include checking to make certain all pads and corks are in good condition and all pads are closing completely.

Saxophones: 4 Vandoren reeds size 2 1/2, reed holder, cleaning swab, mouthpiece cap and ligature, mouthpiece brush, cork grease, and pencil. Inspections will include polishing, checking to make certain all pads are in good condition and are closing completely, and checking to make certain neck cork is in good condition.

PLEASE NOTE: The directors will not permit a student to play on a cracked or broken reed or mouthpiece. The reed and mouthpiece have everything to do with the quality of the sound that the instrument produces. Even a “good” player will sound “bad” on a cracked or chipped reed or mouthpiece. Reeds need to be taken off the mouthpiece at the end of each playing session and placed in a reed holder to protect them and to keep them working properly. Students without reeds are unprepared for class. Please help your band student maintain an adequate supply of reeds throughout the whole year!

Trumpets, Horns, Baritones, Tubas: mouthpiece brush, valve oil, tuning slide grease, cleaning rod and rag, polishing cloth, and pencil. Inspections will include polishing, and checking valves and tuning slides for free movement. Trumpets will also be checked for ease in moving the 3 valve slide.

Trombones: mouthpiece brush, slide cream and spray water bottle (no slide oil), polishing cloth, tuning slide grease, and pencil. Inspections will include polishing, checking the slide and the tuning slide(s) for easy free movement. Trigger trombones will also have triggers checked for easy movement.

Percussion: equipment as specified by Mr. Salinas and Mr. Vaughan and a pencil.

PRACTICING

Practicing is most important to a band student's success. The amount of practice required will vary from person to person, as some need more than others in order to learn assignments and to improve on their instrument. The quality of practice is more important than quantity; therefore, it is important that students practice correctly and have a systematic approach to their daily practice.

1. Select a time of day that will be free of interruptions and try to practice at this same time every day. Find a quiet place where you will be comfortable and relaxed. Music should be placed on a music stand, rather than on a chair or dresser, for proper playing posture.
2. Set a goal for each practice session and stick to it. Don't spend valuable time playing through material you have already mastered; instead, concentrate on the difficult parts. Slow, steady practice will pay off much more quickly than just playing through your music.
3. Students will be given practice information specific to their instrument and will be taught how to practice.

BAND GRADING SYSTEM

Beginner Band Students' grades will be based on four areas:

Minor Assignments: 40%

1. Practice Grade. Each student will receive a practice card to keep a record of after-school practice time. **These cards will be picked up and graded for time practiced and parent signature EVERY Monday.** Students are expected to practice 30 minutes a day at least 5 days a week (150 minutes total). If a student turns in a signed practice record fulfilling these requirements, they will receive a 100 for this portion of their grade. If they exceed these standards, extra credit will be given. If they do not fulfill this requirement points will be deducted proportionately. Even if the student does not practice, if a signed sheet with "0" minutes is turned in, they will receive a "20" for that week. No record turned in will result in a 0 for this grade for the week.
2. Homework assignments.

Major Assignments: 60%

3. Tests. Tests will be given weekly. These tests may be either written, playing, or equipment and supply inspections. Performances will count two test grades.
4. Participation. Students will also receive a weekly participation grade. Students begin with a 100 for the week.

Students are expected to be in class, seated on time with instrument, music and all supplies. They are expected to follow all rules and participate appropriately as instructed. Failure in any of these areas will result in a reduction in this portion of the student's grade.

ELIGIBILITY

1. Every student is important to us, and we expect every student to strive for the best to contribute positively to the band. Band students who have learned good practice habits should not have difficulty passing their academic classes. Those students who do well in band tend to do well in their academic classes. **DID YOU KNOW: Research has shown that the grades of students who drop band go down, not up! Also standardized test scores drop an average of 17 points when a student is no longer participating in the band!!!**

A band member must remain “eligible” to perform in extra-curricular band activities such as competitions and band trips. The term “eligible” means earning a grade of “70” in all classes for the six-week grading period which precedes the event. An “ineligible” student may regain eligibility fifteen school days PLUS seven calendar days after the six-week grading period, providing they earn a “70” or above in ALL their classes. Eligibility requirements do not apply to co-curricular concerts and events as defined by UIL/TEA guidelines.

SCHOOL-OWNED INSTRUMENTS

1. Sharyland I.S.D. owns many of the more expensive band instruments and makes them available to the students. These include tubas, baritones, French horns, bass clarinets, bassoons, etc.
2. Our inventory of instruments is repaired each summer for normal wear and tear. Any student already enrolled in the Sharyland Band program may check out his/her instrument for the summer (after repairs). All students should take instruments home for the summer and find some practice time!
3. **The condition of the instrument at check out is carefully documented. If any repair is needed due to damage caused by the student, the student will be required to pay for the repair bill.**

INSTRUMENT STORAGE & INSURANCE

1. Musical instruments are the responsibility of the band student. Storage space will be provided during school hours. Please check with your homeroom teacher for the storage area at your respective campus. Students should take instruments home for practice on a daily basis. Neither Sharyland I.S.D. nor the band staff is responsible for keeping track of a student’s instrument.
2. All individually owned instruments should be taken home on the last day of school. Neither Sharyland I.S.D. nor the band staff can take responsibility for an instrument left at school over the summer.
3. Many of the music companies from which you will rent or purchase an instrument, will provide insurance against loss, theft or damage during the period you are making payments on the instrument. I encourage you to check.

PRIVATE LESSONS

1. Private lessons are the quickest way to progress on a musical instrument. If the student would like to study with a private teacher, speak with a band director for a teacher recommendation.
2. If a student requires or requests additional help, the Sharyland Band staff will do its best to find the time to do their part to help the student reach his/her potential.

PERFORMANCES

It is **mandatory** for students to participate in all concerts. All students will participate in two concerts, one in the Fall and one in the Spring. Students will be asked to dress in **Sunday best** dress (**no tennis shoes, t-shirts or jeans**). In addition, there may be performances at the student's individual campus as determined by the Principal and the band directors on your child's campus. Performances will count two test grades (see Grading Policies, pg. 5)

SMARTMUSIC

SmartMusic is award-winning interactive music software that provides the ideal practice environment. With a subscription to SmartMusic, students have unlimited access to the world's largest accompaniment library for all ages and skill levels, which includes thousands of pieces of music.

Launch SmartMusic. Plug in the microphone, and start practicing. SmartMusic is ideal for woodwind, brass, percussion, string, and vocal musicians of all levels. Students play or sing their part with background accompaniment and get instant feedback on their computer.

We encourage all parents and students to purchase a student subscription of SmartMusic for their home computer or laptop. The yearly subscription is \$40.00, with free updates during your subscription. Students that purchase SmartMusic at home will be assigned weekly assignments by their director and therefore will not be required to turn in a weekly practice report if the director chooses. For more information on SmartMusic, visit the B.L. Gray Band website or go to the SmartMusic website at smartmusic.com.

UNIVERSITY BAND CAMPS

Several universities offer Summer band camps. These are one or two week camps where students receive intensive instrumental training. They are wonderful developmental experiences for the students. Information on camps will be available in the Spring for interested students. In addition, students may apply for partial band camp scholarships if they are interested. The number and amount of scholarships issued will be determined by available funds.

WE ARE REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO TEACHING YOUR CHILD AND BEING A PART OF ONE OF THE MOST ENJOYABLE AND REWARDING ENDEAVORS IN WHICH THEY WILL EVER BE INVOLVED!!!

Acknowledgment Form:

The band directors expect that you will have read this handbook completely. If you have questions, please contact any Sharyland Band director. Our expectations have been defined in this Handbook, and we expect full participation by every student who is registered for band. The failure of a student to participate fully may result in a failing grade and/or removal from the band program.

Please return this form to the band director.

_____ Student Name (Print)	_____ Instrument	
_____ Parent(s) Name(s) (Print)	_____ Phone Number	
_____ Street Address	_____ City	_____ Zip code
_____ E mail address		
_____ Student's Campus	_____ Home Room Teacher	

I have read and understand what is expected of a Sharyland Band student, and intend to fully participate in the band program as described in the Sharyland Band Handbook for Beginner Bands.

STUDENT SIGNATURE _____

PARENT SIGNATURE _____