

To: Students and Parents of the Thomas County Middle School Band

**Re: Thomas County Middle School Band Policies
8th Grade Edition**

**From: William Majors, Band Director
Lynn Wise, Band Director
Kathy Keown, Principal**

Date: August 4, 2014

In order for us to know that **all parents** have been duly informed concerning details and guidelines related to the Thomas County Middle School Band, **please read, sign, and return the following:**

We, the undersigned member of the Thomas County Middle School Band and parents or legal guardians thereof, acknowledge that we have received, read, and understand all documents dated August 4, 2014. We further acknowledge that the student named below will accept the terms set forth in these documents and will serve to the best of his/her ability.

We give permission for _____ to travel to all away events. Provided all trips are carried out in the manner stated in these documents, we waive all claims against chaperones, the Thomas County Board of Education, and any of its employees for any unforeseen illness, accident, or injury that might be incurred by the student during the trips.

Please include insurance information:

Company _____ Policy Number _____

(Signature of parent or guardian)

(Signature of student)

(Date)

(Date)

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Focus on Georgia Performance Standards!

Music is designated a core academic subject. The Georgia Dept. of Education has developed performance standards for music based on the national performance standards and other research based criteria. The TCMS Band Program is dedicated to providing curriculum based on the Georgia Performance Standards.

In order to successfully implement GPS, band students are scheduled for daily class throughout the school year. Class attendance is essential in meeting these standards. We also consider band co-curricular in nature and carefully plan after school rehearsals to prepare for performances throughout the year.

Thomas County Middle School Band Rules

1. Treat others, as you would like to be treated!
2. Be at the right place at the right time!
3. Always be prepared!
4. Give 100%

To be considered prepared, you must have your instrument, band notebook and a pencil. You will need to bring all items necessary for instrument cleaning and maintenance.

Flutes – tuning rod and cloth

Clarinets/Saxophones – 3 good reeds, cork grease and swab

Brass – valve or slide oil and tuning slide grease

Percussion – bell kit that includes bell set, mallets, drum pad, and size 2B snare sticks.

Announced and unannounced materials checks will be conducted on a regular basis. Preparation will be assessed each day.

If your instrument is in the repair shop you must bring a note from home explaining the situation and guaranteeing that the instrument is being repaired. **Parents and repair shops will be called to confirm the instrument repair!**

Grading Policy

Students will be graded on the following:

- Written and/or Playing Tests
(This includes announced tests and unannounced pop quizzes)
- Band Workbook/Written Assignments
(This includes homework assignments, etc.)

Please be aware of how important it is to be prepared for class. It is imperative that students are prepared each day. Prepared means that you have your instrument, necessary accessories and band notebook with all music ready to play by the beginning of class.

Attendance for After School Band Activities

Attendance at all rehearsals, performances, etc. is required. As a member of the band program, you occupy an important part and space in each band function. Inasmuch as the band works as a finely trained team, it is essential that every member be present for ALL functions which include *rehearsals, concerts, festivals, parades, and out-of-town trips*. Any member who is absent makes the band less effective and also has an adverse effect on the morale of the band.

Pick-up Policy

All students should be picked up within 30 minutes of any after school activity. This includes practices, DHB, All-South, All-State auditions and clinics, parades, and concerts. After 3 late pick-ups the student will not be allowed to stay after school for the rest of the school year. Please make arrangements to be picked up on time at the end of after school activities.

Procedure for Absence from After School Band Activities

Naturally, sickness and other hardships make it necessary to miss occasionally. However, THE PARENT must notify the director as far IN ADVANCE as possible if a student must miss a rehearsal or performance by:

1. Calling the band office at 225-4394 ext. 120 **AND**
2. Submitting a signed letter from parent or guardian.

After turning in your signed **excuse**, the absence will fall into one of three categories:

- 1. PERMITTED** (Advanced notice given was *at least* 10 school days)

Reason: TCMS – sanctioned activity, approved by director.

Note: A permitted absence may not be granted for a day on which the band gives a public performance.

2. EXCUSED (Advanced notice given was less than 10 school days)

Reason: Family emergency or illness.

3. UNEXCUSED Any absence which is not permitted or excused.

Remember: "EARLY IS ON TIME...ON TIME IS LATE!"
Unacceptable Excuses

<u>EXCUSE</u>	<u>SOLUTION</u>
1. "Couldn't get a ride"	1. Be responsible. Check with your other Section members and friends for a ride.
2. "Didn't know about it"	2. Be responsible. You have been given advanced notice.
3. "Parents leaving town"	3. Clear your schedule in advance. Calendars are available in August.
4. "Parents made me stay home To do work or study."	4. Attendance is required! Budget your Time accordingly.
5. "Had an appointment"	5. Do not schedule appointments or meetings during a band activity.

Students do NOT pick and choose the band events in which they wish to participate. If the band performs or rehearses, everyone is to be there every time! Conflicts with other activities (i.e., sport practice, choir practice, Galileans, etc.) are to be resolved as far IN ADVANCE as possible (not the day of the event!)

If an outside rehearsal appears to be "rained out", always report to the band room for indoor rehearsal. Rarely is a rehearsal ever called off because of rain.

Performance takes precedence over practice concerning another school activity. Only reasons of GRAVE EMERGENCY should be used for missing a performance or rehearsal. These arrangements must be made in advance.

Remember, excuses, even *good* ones, will not produce a good band.

Band Room Policies

1. Students are expected to adhere to the posted **band room policies**.
2. No food, drink, gum, candy, etc. is allowed in the band room.
3. The band room should be kept neat and orderly. It should emit a sense of pride and organization at all times. Each member is to clean up around his own area. Store your instrument and music in assigned places – NOT ON THE FLOOR. Do not leave books or other personal belongings in the band room.
4. As a band member, you have earned the privilege of being allowed in the band room. **Non-band students are not allowed in the band room.** They would be the first to be accused if any instrument were to be damaged.
5. Instruments are not to be played by anyone other than the owner or renter. **If it's not yours, DO NOT touch it.**
6. At 2:50 band students should pick up their instrument from the band room and report to their pick up location. Students should do this quickly and quietly so as not to disturb afternoon announcements. Students WILL NOT “hang out” in the band room. Any student wishing to stay after school to individually practice or make up a test should arrange that with a band director. The band director will give you a pass to show your homeroom teacher.

Storage Space

Each student will be issued their own storage space. This storage space should be used to store band related items only. Given limited space, flute and clarinet players may have to share storage space. A large storage room with shelves is provided for larger instruments.

Rehearsals

Please refer to our monthly calendar for after-school rehearsal days and times.

Occasionally, extra rehearsals may be called when necessary.

For afternoon rehearsals, you must wait until fourth load is called before reporting to the band room!

Rehearsal time is short and every moment must be used for actual rehearsal purposes. If you delay the rehearsal for even one minute, you have wasted a great deal of time because every other member of the band has also been forced to waste one minute. The following guidelines are used in all fine organizations and are the foundation of our rehearsal procedure:

1. Band members should have the following items at all rehearsals:
 - a. Instrument
 - b. Music
 - c. Pencil
 - d. Extra reeds, valve oil, etc.
2. When the band is called to attention, a student is considered TARDY if not in place and ready to perform. We go by the band room clock! All tardies are unacceptable unless properly excused by valid reasons and/or a written pass.
3. When the director or someone in charge steps in front of the class, ALL ACTIVITY MUST CEASE. Your full attention must be given to that person and nothing should be allowed to distract you. Be QUIET, LISTEN, and WATCH. There is no talking, even if it deals with the music. Inattentive or disruptive students will be penalized.
4. Do not leave your seat unless given permission to do so.
5. Eating, drinking, gum chewing and use of cell phones are strictly PROHIBITED during any rehearsal or appearance by the band.

REHEARSAL IS SERIOUS BUSINESS

REMEMBER: SUPERIOR bands are the result of SUPERIOR rehearsals!

Uniforms

The TCMS Band uniform should provide each member with a spirit of unity and a sense of purpose and pride. You should therefore give the utmost care to the uniform and in no way become careless with it.

Uniforms are one of the single largest expenses a band can be faced with. It is imperative that as parents you monitor the use and care of these uniforms. They must last, not only through your child's experience with the band, but many students after them.

1. Uniforms should always be clean for performances. Please clean uniform pants by taking them to the dry cleaners.
2. Pants should be properly creased and the bottom of the leg should rest gently on the top of the shoe without folding. A student should never wear pants that are not properly hemmed. Please hem pants without cutting off any material.
3. Shoes can be purchased at Bando Shoe Company (228-6578). We will wear black shoes with black soles. Black socks are required. Shoes should always be clean.

4. At every performance, we will either wear our band t-shirt or our polo shirt.
5. None of the issued parts for band uniforms should be worn except for band functions and performances. Students may purchase additional t-shirts to wear to school and other activities.
6. Students should not wear jewelry with their uniforms. This includes newly pierced ears that the ear rings cannot be removed from. For newly pierced ears please cover ear rings with a small band aid.
7. All students should have a pair of blue jeans for some parade performances and special events. The pants should meet school dress code requirements and should be worn with a belt.

These uniforms must last for many years to come. It is very important that you help maintain the integrity of the uniform. Only with your help can we assure that the band looks top quality at all events.

NO UNIFORM IS A UNIFORM UNLESS IT IS WORN CORRECTLY!

Football Games

1. Inspection takes place in the band room before departure. This inspection will include each individual's uniform, instrument and equipment.
2. After the inspection, the band will line up outside and load on to buses to be transported to the stadium. (or line up to go to the TCMS campus stadium)
3. Wear the uniform correctly or not at all; NEVER PARTIALLY!
4. Absolutely no individual playing on any instrument will be allowed.
5. Members are reminded that the band is providing a public performance at each game. We have a job to do, therefore, WATCH the director at all times when they are standing in front of the band. LISTEN for directions, get the music out quickly and be ready to play.
6. Bottled water will be provided during the third quarter. No food or any other drinks are allowed in the stands during a performance. Chewing gum is NEVER permitted!
7. NO ONE but uniformed personnel and band chaperones are allowed in the band section. Visitors are allowed in the band section only with the director's approval.
8. No one is dismissed early.
9. After the game, pass trash to the end of the row and check to see if you have all of your belongings: music, lyres, etc.
10. While at games, we are constantly in public view and your conduct must reflect the highest standards. REMEMBER, everything you do is a direct reflection on the band. In this setting, you are not acting as an individual. You are part of the whole body and cannot be separated from it when you are in uniform. Don't let carelessness, restlessness, or irresponsibility ruin things for everyone else.

Concerts & Public Appearances

1. Notices of all appearances will be posted on each monthly calendar. This calendar will be posted in the band room as well as sent home with each band student.
2. All rules of conduct and order which apply to rehearsals and football games will also apply to other public performances.
3. Proper language is to be used at all times.
4. Appearance must be neat at all times when in uniform or while under observation as representatives of the band program and school.
5. A performance or appearance is **not completed** until students are officially dismissed by the director.
6. Let your conduct, both before and after performances, be above reproach. **Your conduct reflects on your band, your school, and your community.**
7. After dismissal, be sure that you have properly taken care of instruments, music, etc. before leaving the place of the concert or appearance.

Travel and Trips

1. Mode of transportation will be provided or approved by the school. Students traveling with the band must travel with the group in the vehicle provided. Exceptions, in grave emergency, must be approved by the director.
2. Students will ride both ways on a trip on their assigned bus. These assignments are made ahead of time to avoid confusion.
3. The school has a policy that no student may return by any other mode of transportation other than the band bus, except by the following:
 - a) When written permission is submitted BEFORE departure from school.
 - b) The PARENT takes custody from the director after the performance.
(Students will not be released to anyone but the parents of the student.)
4. Each student is responsible for seeing that his/her instrument and belongings are **loaded** at the departure point, after the performance, and **unloaded** upon the return. This includes cleaning up trash after any band trip!
5. At least one adult chaperone will be placed on each bus. They are in COMPLETE charge. Respect is imperative! They will take attendance and communicate important

information to you regarding the appearance ahead. **Absolute silence must be maintained during roll call!**

6. While traveling on buses, you will obey the instructions of the bus driver. Putting hands, arms, heads, etc. out of a window is strictly prohibited. DO NOT ever throw anything out of a window FOR ANY REASON.
7. While traveling on buses, students may talk in an orderly manner. If your voice is loud enough to be heard above other conversations, you are TOO LOUD! When crossing a railroad track, **absolute silence** must be maintained. When going through a town, students will not shout and UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES CALL OUT OR MAKE REMARKS TO THE PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE BUS!
8. Do not stand or move around in the bus while it is in motion.
9. NO media players on the bus without headphones.
10. No public display of affection
11. SCHOOL BOARD RULES ARE IN EFFECT FOR THE DURATION OF ANY TRIP. (All rules apply just as if you were on the school campus.)

Instruments & Equipment

1. Each member is responsible for the care and maintenance for his/her instrument.
2. All school-owned instruments must be checked out by filling out a **School-Owned Instrument Loan Agreement**. Once issued, the instrument becomes the responsibility of the student for proper care, maintenance, and protection from damage or theft. Students using school-owned instruments will be responsible for and charged for any damages to the instruments. **This includes drum heads, rims, etc.**
3. Flute players should have a tuning rod and cleaning cloth.
4. Clarinet and Saxophone players should have 3 good reeds, cork grease, and a cleaning swab.
5. Brass players should have valve or slide oil and tuning slide grease.
6. Percussionists should have a bell kit that includes the bell set, mallets, drum pad, and size 2B snare drum sticks.

7. All **marching instruments** must be equipped with lyres.
8. You may store your instrument in the correct designated instrument storage area. If you have been issued a **locker**, this will be considered your designated storage area. For those students with larger instruments, the instrument storage room will be considered your designated storage area. The case must be closed and latched. We do our best to monitor instruments stored in the band room. The band directors, staff members, school, or school system does not and will not assume the responsibility for tampered, broken, or stolen instruments kept in the band storage areas. If you choose to leave your instrument in the band room, **you do this at your own risk!**

After three warnings, a \$5.00 ransom will be charged for school owned instruments stored in undesignated areas.

10. Every person participating in marching band will need to have a lyre and flip folder. These can be purchased at Jim's Jewelers for a small amount. You will need your lyre and flip folder at every marching band practice.

Please remember there is a reason for each rule or policy. Each is necessary in order for the band to function successfully.

Individual Practice

It is the responsibility of each band member to practice his/her individual music outside of band rehearsal time. Practice should be spent on scales, music, and etudes assigned by the director. Each student should practice at least 2 ½ hours per week (5 days in a week for 30 minutes a day). Per appointment, students may use the band room to practice during the 30 minutes before and/or after school.

Practicing assures that the student is strengthening fundamental skills and learning assigned music. Furthermore, the individual improvement will directly affect the overall improvement, abilities, and success of the entire band. **Parents are asked to help their son/daughter set aside a quiet place and time for practice on a regular basis.**

Students are **strongly encouraged** to take lessons with a qualified private instructor. For a reasonable lesson fee, you will increase the rate of improvement and success on your instrument by a notable margin. To obtain a private instructor, see the director.

Personal Practice Guide

1. Warm-up on long tones.
While playing long tones work on:
 - A. Posture
 - B. Breathing
 - C. Tone Quality
 - D. Embouchure
 - Flute** – relaxed embouchure, pout slightly with bottom lip
 - Clarinet/Saxophone** – firm embouchure muscles
 - Brass** – firm embouchure, cheeks not puffed out.
 - Percussion** – single stroke roll – very slow to fast back to slow (check Hand position, grip, stick position, sticks coming straight up and down), Keep strokes even when playing.

2. Play all scales (wind players) or rudiments (percussion).
Say the notes and finger the notes – Do not memorize fingerings only.

3. Work on all sections of music you CANNOT play. Work short sections first.
 1. Clap and count the rhythms
 2. Say the notes and finger the notes.
 3. Double check the time signature and key signature.
 4. Start by playing very slowly and gradually work up to the correct tempo.
 5. Then link short sections into longer sections.

4. Finish your practice session by playing whatever you would like. End your practice session by having fun!

Instrument Care & Maintenance Tips

To ensure success in any band program you must have a well-maintained instrument. An instrument that is taken care of should last you many years. Repairs can be expensive and time that your instrument is in the repair shop is time that you are not playing in class and practicing individually. In order to ensure your success you should try to avoid needing repairs on your instrument as much as possible.

Woodwinds

1. Gently twist the sections together and be careful to never squeeze the keys or mechanisms when putting your instrument together.

2. **Never** jam parts together. You could chip, break, or dent your instrument.

3. **Never** leave your instrument on a chair or a music stand and **never** try to stand it up on its bell. Your instrument is not meant to do a balancing act.
4. At the end of **every** rehearsal wipe the outside of your instrument with a soft cloth. Carefully dry out the inside of your instrument with a swab. Water left in an instrument will rot the key pads which leads to a very expensive repair.
5. If in doubt DON'T DO ANYTHING let your director or a repairperson look at it!

Clarinets, Oboes, and Saxophones

1. You must always lift the bridge key to prevent bending the key.
2. You should also use plenty of cork grease so you will not have to jam sections together.

Flutes

1. You should never put any kind of grease, oil, or lubricant anywhere on their flute. Let a professional handle it.

Brass

1. Gently twist the sections together and be careful to never squeeze the keys or mechanisms when putting your instrument together.
2. **Never** jam parts together you could chip, break, or dent your instrument.
3. **Never** leave your instrument on a chair or a music stand and **never** try to stand it up on its bell. Your instrument is not meant to do a balancing act.
4. At the end of **every** rehearsal wipe the outside of your instrument with a soft cloth. And carefully dry out the inside of your instrument by opening the water key and blowing fast air through your horn. Water left in an instrument will rot the water key pads and could lead to a very expensive repair.
5. Wash your mouthpiece with a soft brush and warm soapy water **at least once a week**.
6. If in doubt DON'T DO ANYTHING let your director or a repairperson look at it!

Trumpets

1. The valves are not interchangeable! If you take them out, remember to put them in the correct hole or you will not be able to play.

Trombones

1. It is very easy to damage your slide and a damaged slide greatly impairs your playing ability.
2. **Never** lay your trombone down or sit it on a chair.
3. Be **very, very** careful to never ding, or bend any part of your slide.
4. **Always, Always, Always,** keep your slide very well oiled.
5. To know if your slide is in good condition try this test. Hold your trombone so that the bottom of the slide is touching the ground. Gently pick up the trombone (without picking up the slide) The slide should **not** move with the trombone.

Baritone/Tuba

1. **Never** stand your instrument on its bell. It is not meant to be balanced and if your horn falls it will bend the bell.

Chaperones

As the band travels out of town for trips and performances, chaperones are needed to assist the directors in providing a safe and orderly trip for every student. To be considered active, one must have demonstrated a willingness to help with any activity that might arise in the band program. Chaperones are generally selected based on your child's years with the band and the parents' involvement during those years. Involvement includes, but is not limited to, fundraisers, committee service, concession stand help, attendance at regular meetings and special events as they arise throughout the year.

Chaperone Responsibilities

1. The major responsibility is to provide a safe and positive experience for the children as they participate in the band's activities.
2. To maintain order and control noise level on the buses at all times.
3. To assure trash is deposited in trash containers as necessary.
4. To assure students are on their assigned busses at every stop. This includes calling role as we load or reload a bus.
5. To check the isles on the buses to assure clear isles as regulated by state ordinances.
6. To escort students to and from the restroom at all games and rest stops.
7. To distribute food or drinks to the students
8. To stay with the band at all times when traveling out of town.
9. To administer and enforce all rules and regulations set forth by the Thomas County Board of Education and the Band Directors.
10. Understand good judgment must be used in all situations, and understand that these students are giving their time to represent TCMS. The chaperones are not to be overbearing or to create a negative experience for the student unnecessarily. Any situation that cannot be resolved calmly should be reported to the director assigned to your bus.
11. Inappropriate behavior or violation of the school rules governing off-campus activities must be reported immediately to the band director. The director will administer discipline accordingly.

Parents must understand that chaperones are not here to judge parenting skills or raise your children. What might be tolerated or accepted in the home, especially as it relates to dress code or male and female interaction, might not be tolerated on the bus trips. We must enforce the rules of the Board of Education.

Fundraisers

As a band organization, we will do one or two fundraisers during the school year depending on our needs. In order to be successful with these fundraisers, we must have people working behind the scenes bringing it all together. The more help we have the less work any one individual is burdened with. All proceeds from these fundraisers help your child in a direct or indirect way.

Helpful Parent Points

1. Try to make sure your child is either on time or early to all practices, rehearsals, and performing events.
2. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for each activity. Please keep in mind the extreme weather conditions we have from time to time.
3. Make sure student have food, money, instrument, etc. for all out of town trips. Students will not able to perform without complete uniforms and instruments.
4. Make sure uniforms are clean and all repairs are made as necessary. Students with dirty uniforms may not be able to perform.
5. Make sure you communicate with your child about upcoming fund-raisers and events. You could be caught off guard without enough time to adequately prepare.
6. Please make sure you are present and on time to pick up your child after practice or when he or she returns from a game or event. The directors cannot go home until every child has been picked up.
7. Please encourage your child to eat something before any performance.
8. Please honor all rules and regulations and support the chaperones as they deal with your child.
9. Please communicate with your child that they must listen to and obey the chaperones. Any disagreements with a chaperones' behavior must be taken up with the band director.