

# Hernando Middle School Bands

Band Directors – Joseph Quinnelly, Tyler Harris, DJ Fitzgerald, and Len Killough

Principal – Dr. Jerry Floate

## **BAND HANDBOOK**

Hernando Middle School  
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## **Purpose**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a convenient reference for students, parents, administrators, and directors who have questions concerning any aspect of the band program at Hernando Middle School. We have made an honest effort to include and explain every possible facet of the band program.

## **Philosophy**

The Hernando Middle School band is an organization devoted to the education of all the young people it touches. Members experience more than just playing an instrument; they learn about teamwork and striving for excellence. They learn and experience every day what it is like to be a part of something that will not only teach them about music, but will teach them about life. As a part of the educational experience, the HMS band program has traditionally offered opportunities for students to participate in very successful performing ensembles. The standards for participation in the HMS band program are maintained at the highest possible levels. Students at the Middle School will be expected to conform to the highest standards of discipline, rehearsal conduct, and individual performance as we prepare them to be members of the Hernando High School Band.

## **Class Expectations for Appropriate Behavior**

Each student and parent/guardian should familiarize themselves with the following EXPECTATIONS to avoid any possible misunderstandings.

1. Each band student will be seated in their appropriate seat one minute after the tardy bell rings with their instrument, band binder, and pencil.
2. Students are responsible for having, getting, and maintaining appropriate supplies for band class everyday.
3. Students will be allowed to play their instruments without permission during rehearsal.
4. Food, Drinks, Gum, and Candy are not allowed in the band hall. Water is fine.
5. Students are expected to remain in class for the entire class. Do not ask permission to leave class for any reason. The teacher understands emergencies and those will be handled case by case.

## **CLASSROOM PROCEDURES**

1. Enter the rehearsal hall in a quiet, courteous, and orderly fashion.
2. Students must be seated with instruments assembled and proper class materials evident one minute following the tardy bell.
3. Students will not play instruments without permission.
4. All items not needed for the rehearsal should be left in the hallway along the wall.
5. The band director will dismiss students from class. **The bell does not dismiss the class, the teacher does.**

## GRADING POLICY

### Major Tests- 50%

Each performance is considered a major test grade. The students will also have weekly playing tests that will count as one test grade each. Tests will consist of materials covered during class each day. Students with unexcused absences on the day of a test will have three days to make up the test that he/she missed.

**After three days, the grade received will be a “0.”**

### Passoffs- 15%

Students are assigned a weekly pass off playing test that is to be completed outside of school and turned in online to be submitted for their grade. These weekly assignments must be submitted on Thursday in order to receive full credit. If turned in on Friday students can only receive a 50%. After Friday the grade received will be a “0.”

### Participation/Daily Grade - 35%

Students will receive a weekly participation grade of 100. Each day the student will earn 20 points. To earn the 20 points the student must bring his/her instrument to class, bring necessary materials to class (pencil, music, proper playing supplies), come to class on time, and participate in class by being ready to play. If the daily grade is not earned for any reason stated, the grade for the day will be a “0.”

### HOW ARE WEEKLY PLAYING TESTS EVALUATED???

Middle School Band (for beginning and intermediate students) is a group participation activity where students learn musical skills in a controlled setting. Although most instruction for beginning and intermediate band students takes place in a group setting, the students are evaluated *often* and *individually*. The student's term band grade ultimately reflects the level of individual skill the student possesses on his/her instrument, and is determined from the average of a series of playing tests. *Practice time at home is a direct reflection of the students playing ability.*

The playing test grades are evaluated using the following rubric.

Beginning Grade: 100

- Major performance error (wrong note or rhythm): minus 5 points for each error.
- Failure to demonstrate proper tempo/beat (not tapping foot): minus 5 to 15 points, depending on the severity of tempo variance.
- Incorrect posture: minus 5 points
- Incorrect breathing/breath support: minus 5 points
- Poor tone not directly related to the previous two errors: minus 5 points
- Incorrect holding position or incorrect fingerings: minus 5 points

Examples :

Bobby performs “Go Tell Aunt Rhodie” while demonstrating correct posture and holding position, proper breathing, representative tone quality for his instrument, and plays all the correct notes while making only one rhythm error. (-5)

Grade = 95

Mary performs “Jingle Bells” with poor posture (-5) and poor holding position (-5), poor breath support (-5), and makes 7 major performance errors (5 wrong notes and 2 wrong rhythms). (-35) total (-60)

Grade = 40

## **SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR BAND**

Each student enrolled in middle school band is expected to:

1. HAVE AN INSTRUMENT IN PLAYING CONDITION.  
INSTRUMENTS MUST BE PURCHASED FROM A MERCHANT SPECIALIZING IN BAND INSTRUMENT SALES AND SERVICE. INSTRUMENTS PURCHASED FROM MERCHANTS WHO ALSO SELL GROCERIES, CLOTHES, AND AUTO PARTS DO NOT MEET PERFORMANCE STANDARDS OF THE HERNANDO BAND PROGRAM AND ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE. Used instruments should be approved by the band director.
2. Have a band binder with all music, method books, and materials issued by the band director. Loose materials should be in sheet protectors.
3. Pencil.
4. Name-tag on your instrument case (these are available for free from the directors, just ask)
5. 8<sup>th</sup> grade band students who play woodwind and brass instruments must have a flip folder/lyre for their instrument.

## **CONSEQUENCES**

1. Students who fail to bring proper class materials will:
  1. Receive a 0 for daily grade
  2. Will have an alternate assignment during class.
  3. Students consistently unable to follow classroom rules or procedures risk being removed from the band program.
2. Students displaying inappropriate behaviors will:
  1. Receive a verbal warning
  2. Receive a 0 for daily grade
  3. Student-teacher conference with letter to parent
  4. Receive an office referral

## INSTRUMENT MAINTENANCE AND CARE

1. Each student will be provided a place to store their equipment during the school day. The school is equipped with instrument storage and the band room will be fully supervised when directors are on campus. However, Hernando Middle School and Desoto County Schools will not be responsible for lost or stolen items.
2. AT NO TIME SHOULD ANY STUDENT LEAVE AN INSTRUMENT IN ANY PART OF THE SCHOOL OTHER THAN THE BAND HALL OR WHERE INSTRUCTED BY TEACHER TO LEAVE IT DURING THE DAY.
3. Students with instrument problems should see the band director before taking the instrument to any repair facility. The band directors are able to repair many minor problems at no charge to the students. Instruments requiring extensive work should be taken to a full-service repair facility. AT NO TIME SHOULD STUDENTS OR UNTRAINED ADULTS ATTEMPT TO REPAIR BAND INSTRUMENTS.

## NOTE FOR STUDENTS USING SCHOOL-OWNED INSTRUMENTS

School-owned instruments are to be taken care of as if they were personally owned. These instruments are very expensive and need to be maintained in good working condition. The district has required us to charge a maintenance fee for all school owned instruments. The user fee will be \$100 per year. This fee needs to be paid at the beginning of each fall semester. **You are responsible for any charges above the user fee resulting from neglect, poor maintenance, and accidents (dents, etc.). The condition of the instrument will be noted and logged in the inventory at the time of checkout.**

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND REQUIREMENTS

**There are some costs associated with being a member of the HMS band. This cost varies depending on the student's grade. Checks should be made payable to Hernando Middle School, not HMS Band or Band Boosters. Please include what and whom the check is for in the memo section of the check. We will also need a phone number on the check.**

1. **6<sup>th</sup> grade** band students are responsible for having a band binder and sheet protectors.
2. **7<sup>th</sup> grade** band students are responsible for having a band binder and sheet protectors. There are also optional opportunities for 7th graders, such as Honor Bands. There are travel costs associated with these optional trips, which will be discussed closer to the trip dates.
3. **8<sup>th</sup> grade** band students have optional opportunities, such as Honor Bands. There are travel costs associated with these optional trips, which will be discussed closer to the trip dates. 8<sup>th</sup> graders who play woodwind or brass instruments will also need to purchase a lyre and flip folder. A price listing for these will be discussed in class. Finally, 8th graders will also be required to purchase a band jersey for the band's outdoor performances throughout the year. Pricing for this will be made available ASAP.
4. **All Band Students** are asked to help with fundraising. Fundraising is a crucial part of any successful organization. You will have many fundraising opportunities to help raise money for the band and the money raised will be spent directly on music, new instruments, equipment, and supplies needed for the middle school band program.
5. Any student 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> using a school owned instrument (tuba, baritone, French horn, etc.) is responsible for a fee of \$100. This fee is necessary for yearly maintenance and repair on the instruments. It is important for us to keep our school instruments in good playing condition so students down the road will have a quality instrument to play on.
6. Students will need to concert-appropriate clothes for the year. 6th and 7th grade students will wear nicer dress clothes. 8th grade students will wear all black for their indoor concerts this year and the band jersey for their outdoor events.
7. Each band student is responsible for having his/her instrument in class everyday.
8. Each band student is responsible for purchasing supplies needed for his/ her instrument (reeds, valve oil, care kit, drumsticks, method book, etc).
9. Each band member is required to attend ALL performances. The only excused absence will be a death in the immediate family, or personal sickness (a doctor's excuse is required). In either case, the director should be emailed for notification.

**Students with unexcused absences from any band performance are subject to removal from the Hernando Middle School Band Program.**

## Behavior and Attitude

In order for the band program to be successful, all members must be present for all rehearsals and events. Therefore, members of the program must avoid behavior and attitude issues in their classes that might affect their ability to participate. In addition, negative attitudes and inappropriate behaviors during class and events outside of class will negatively affect the status of the entire program. Inappropriate behaviors would include excessive write ups, suspension, DCAC, and other similar offenses. Should behavior and attitude become an issue in any class, rehearsal, or event, the staff reserves the right to remove the student from the program. Being a participant in this program is an honor. The integrity of this program must remain intact!!

### PRACTICE TIME AND HOMEWORK

Practicing is an essential part of playing your instrument. There is no substitute for consistent, disciplined daily practice. In band, your homework is practice time at home. When one person doesn't practice, it hurts the entire band's progress. Don't let others down; do your part.

Tips to successful practice!!!

1. Establish a daily routine (same time, same place)
2. Find a comfortable and quiet place. (Not in front of the TV)
3. Use a good chair and a music stand. (Not your bed)
4. Practice things you need to get better, as well as things you already can do.
5. Avoid distractions-make the most of your time.

### Performances

Performing is an essential part of any young musician's life. As part of our music education curriculum, we require each band student to perform, and each of the performances is considered a major test grade. Each middle school band will perform at the end of each semester.

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade band is also responsible for playing at 2 middle school football games and 1 high school football game. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade concert band will perform at a concert festival for evaluation in the spring.

Students will also participate in our solo/ensemble festival by learning and performing a solo or small ensemble.



Hopefully this band handbook has been helpful in addressing any questions and/or concerns you may have about the Hernando Middle School Band Program. Following many questions, misunderstandings, and issues in the past over band policies and procedures, the band staff felt it would be helpful to provide you with this overview of rules, expectations, and policies for the 2023-2024 school year. The policies and procedures of the Hernando Middle School Band Program were designed to provide the most positive and successful learning environment for the band members. **PLEASE FILL OUT THE HANDBOOK FORM FOUND ON YOUR STUDENTS DRAGONFLY ACCOUNT BY FRIDAY, AUGUST 11.** Your completed form confirms that you have read, understand, and are willing to comply by these rules, expectations, and policies.

Thank you,

Joseph Quinnelly, Director of Middle School Bands

Tyler Harris, Assistant Band Director

DJ Fitzgerald, Assistant Band Director

Len Killough, Director of Bands

Dr. Jerry Floate, Principal