

Belle Vernon Area High School Marching Band Handbook



Available online at www.bellevnonbands.org

Alma Mater

*Our Alma Mater
We'll Be True to Thee
To Valor and Integrity
We Pledge Our Loyalty
Hail Mighty Leopards
Our Hearts Remain
In Steadfast Love for
GOLD and WHITE
Our Memories Not In Vain*

Fight Song

*Sing hoorah for the Gold and White
Sing hoorah for the Gold and White
For the school we love, on to victory
And when the foe is down, we will raise a mighty cheer
So sing hoorah for the Gold and White
On to victory tonight
And with all our might
We will FIGHT FIGHT FIGHT
For the grand old Gold and White*

Belle Vernon Area HS Marching Band Program

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME LETTER.....	4
INTRODUCTION AND MISSION STATEMENT.....	5
BAND CHAIN OF COMMAND.....	6
PHILOSOPHY OF MUSIC EDUCATION, POLICY, PARENTS, AND OBJECTIVES.....	7
EXPECTATIONS	8
MEMBERSHIP POLICY.....	9
GENERAL CONDUCT.....	10 - 11
REHEARSALS.....	11 - 12
PERFORMANCES.....	12 - 13
ATTENDANCE.....	14 - 16
BAND CAMP (See Attendance).....	12
UNIFORMS.....	16 - 18
ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY.....	19 - 22
PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT.....	23 - 24
MEDICAL FORM	25 - 26

*Please note that pages 22, 24, 25 and 26 must be completed, signed and returned by the first full day of band camp.

A WELCOME LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the 2025 edition of bands here at Belle Vernon Area High School! You are about to embark on one of the most rewarding experiences of your life. The Leopard Marching Band is an outstanding organization representing Belle Vernon Area High School, the school district, and the entire Belle Vernon area. I am very glad you decided to join us this season!

The band program at Belle Vernon Area is an important and dynamic part of the total high school experience. The band is the largest, most colorful, highly disciplined, and visible of all school groups. The Band serves two functions, the first of which is to educate students, both in the area of instrumental music and in the area of life skills.

Second and equally important function of the band is its performance obligation to the Belle Vernon Area School District and to the community. The band fulfills this obligation through performances such as concerts, parades, performances at sporting events and community functions throughout the school year.

By taking advantage of the opportunity to perform in one of the music programs at Belle Vernon Area, you can foster the self-discipline, work habits, and attention to detail that will undoubtedly benefit you throughout your life. It is no accident that students who participate in band, music and the performing arts are consistently among the top students academically, and once out of school often become the most successful members of society.

The 2025 season is sure to be a great success. We have an exciting show planned with energetic music, drill and events planned for the entire season. In addition, we will have several returning and some new faces on campus to help on staff. I hope you are getting excited to share your talents as the Belle Vernon Area High School Leopard Marching Band with our community and beyond, as this is going to be a great year!

I encourage you all to consistently remember to keep a strong sense of pride and well-being of the band before your own. Remember we want this to be a positive and exciting experience for everyone involved. Think of your actions before you act – “Is this what’s best for the band? How am I contributing to the greater good of the group?” With the right attitude and determination, we will be able to make this year’s band very successful.

Again, welcome to the band! I truly hope this will be an exciting year for you and the band.

-Mr. Surovchak

INTRODUCTION

All rules contained within this booklet are to be adhered to by all members of the bands. These rules have been established to promote education, performance and the safety of all students. These regulations are established and approved in order to provide the most fair and successful environment for the ensemble. As a band, it is everyone's responsibility to uphold these policies and strive for the success of our program. All rules and regulations are made in compliance with those set forth by the Belle Vernon Area School District and have been approved by the Belle Vernon Area School District Administration and Board of Directors.



MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Belle Vernon Area High School Marching Band is to strengthen school and community pride through the public performance of music. We strive to develop proficiency in instrumental music with visual enhancement and aim to develop the maturity of members through a positive, life-preparing experience.

BAND CHAIN OF COMMAND

1. The Director of Bands is in charge of administering the total musical and visual marching band program at Belle Vernon Area High School. This individual is to work in conjunction with the Belle Vernon Area School District Administration to provide a safe, enjoyable, educational and successful environment for the marching band.
2. The Assistant Directors & Colorguard, Dance Team and Majorette Instructors of the Marching Band help the Director in the following areas: the teaching and selection of music, assist with drill, evaluation of the musical and visual program, evaluation of personnel and working with the Director throughout the marching and concert band season.
3. The Specialty Instructors are directly responsible to the Director. These people are in charge of the entire aspect of the individual specialty areas. This includes: warm-ups, pre-game music, show music, parade music and marching/maneuvering. They are in charge of running and maintaining sectional rehearsals, as well as contributing during the full band rehearsals.
4. The Drum Major is directly responsible to the Director and band staff, and has specific responsibilities assisting in the drilling of the band and in rehearsals and performances. Auditions/interviews for this position will be held during the spring semester. This individual is a liaison between the staff and the students. The Drum Major must attend an educational/motivational camp during the summer.
5. Section Leaders will be selected through an audition and application process as specified in the handbook under student leaders. Section Leaders are responsible for their specific units or sections of the band. Section Leaders will be outstanding marchers, teachers and leaders. They are to help maintain order during all events, submit requests for necessary equipment and to act as peer leaders; both on and off the field.
6. Drill Instructors are outstanding marchers who have applied and are selected by the Director. They are responsible for helping section leaders set drill and work with members who may be having problems with marching or drill.
7. The Belle Vernon Area High School Marching Band members -- YOU -- the individual band member is the backbone of the organization -- the one who sees that tasks get accomplished. You are the future leaders of this organization!

*Any Chaperone, Volunteers, Parents/Guardians should direct questions and concerns directly to the band staff. These will in turn be reviewed with the director. Please feel free to schedule a meeting with the director and staff.

PHILOSOPHY OF MUSIC EDUCATION, POLICY, PARENTS, OBJECTIVES, EXPECTATIONS

PHILOSOPHY OF MUSIC EDUCATION

Music is an aural phenomenon that satisfies the human need to respond to life experiences through singing, listening and/or playing an instrument. The goal of the music education program is to provide students the musical skills, appreciation and experiences to continue, support and succeed in music in our schools and beyond. In our music classrooms students will learn the life skills that will contribute to their personal growth as a human being by providing opportunities in music which develop critical thinking skills, communication skills, leadership skills, cultural and historical knowledge, and most importantly a means of creative expression through musical performance.

A STATEMENT OF POLICY

In order to assist band members and parents in understanding areas of responsibility, a statement of band policy is herein set forth. Becoming familiar with this policy will enable each individual to make the most of this great opportunity to be a member of the Belle Vernon Area High School band program, becoming a better person and a better musician.

We firmly believe that the student should improve through regular practice. In the Belle Vernon Area School District band program, we feel that when the student has lost the will to improve him / herself or make a better contribution to the band, he / she is wasting the time and efforts of his / her fellow members and the community by continuing in this program. The HAPPIEST student is the one who is improving through regular habits of practice and daily progress. He / she must not only know right from wrong, but must be able to stand for principles. He / she must develop a high sense of purpose toward which he / she is 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 all students in learning and bettering themselves.

PARENT ASSISTANCE

What a wonderful opportunity you have as a parent to be involved in your child's music education by getting involved as a band parent. We realize that many parents are limited in the number of hours they can contribute, but nearly all successful parent organizations share a common feature: *Many* parents contribute a *little* time or expertise to help the organization run smoothly. Every parent of a band member has the opportunity to become a member of the Belle Vernon Area Marching Band Boosters organization. The purpose of the Band Boosters is to support and reinforce the successful operation of the high school band program. The Band Boosters have many responsibilities during the course of the year to help the band succeed. There are a number of ways parents can help, and if you are interested in doing so, we encourage you to speak with our current booster officers. We look forward to working with you and your child to make this year a success!

OBJECTIVES OF THE BAND PROGRAM

- To provide a musically engaging experience for all band members
- To develop and improve the performance skills of the various wind and percussion instruments
- To provide for the musical needs of the school and the community
- To foster life skills which will contribute to the students overall education in preparation for post-secondary careers including leadership, critical thinking, communication skills, and cultural and historical knowledge
- To promote a means of creative expression through musical performance

1.0 - EXPECTATIONS

1.1 In order to ensure the safety and educational quality of the Belle Vernon Area High School Band Program, there must be an established set of rules, regulations and policies that must be followed and adhered to by all members of the band at all times. The following expectations, rules, procedures, and guidelines are in effect at all times:

1.2 Band members, welcome to one of the most significant experiences of your life! Fundamental to this experience and the success of the group are five key areas: *Respect, Integrity, Class, Self-Discipline, and Pride*. In addition to these areas, topics such as ATTITUDE, GENERAL CONDUCT, ATTENDANCE, REHEARSALS, PERFORMANCES, and BUS TRIPS expectations are listed. It is your responsibility to be familiar with all that is expected of you in order for the band to run efficiently and smoothly. One basic rule you can use to apply to all expectations is asking yourself a simple question. "What is best for the band?"

1.3 SIX KEY AREAS

1.4 **RESPECT** - Respect for oneself and one's fellow members results in an attitude of cooperation and mutual support. Even if you think someone is disrespecting you, you always treat them with respect because your actions represent the band.

1.5 **INTEGRITY** - Acting with integrity leads one to accept responsibility of commitment for being part of this kind of organization, where everyone depends upon all of the other members of the group for their individual success. It requires honesty and sincerity.

1.6 **CLASS** - Conducting one's self with class projects to others a quality and excellence of style, an elegance of manner and bearing.

1.7 **SELF-DISCIPLINE** - Self-discipline is the ability to get yourself to take action regardless of your emotional state. Self-discipline is one of many personal development tools available to you. Self-discipline is like a muscle. The more you train it, the stronger you become. The less you train it, the weaker you become. Self-discipline requires an understanding of oneself and an awareness of the ways in which one can cope with difficulties, frustrations, and disappointments. Self-discipline affords a person the inclination to concentrate on a task as long as is necessary to learn, perfect, or complete it.

1.8 **PRIDE** - Pride, a sense of dignity and self-respect, is really the fundamental precept of participation in the Leopard Marching Band and a guide to responsibility. Those who have pride in themselves will do their honest best to give their maximum effort at all times and will not engage in any activity that will denigrate themselves or the organization.

1.9 **ATTITUDE** - Those who have pride in themselves will generally project a positive attitude. A positive attitude is characterized by a generally cheerful outlook toward rehearsals and performances, cooperation in the preparation and maintenance of facilities and an eagerness to do what is necessary to be successful. Regardless of your ability, if your attitude is not a positive one: where you will do your individual best to improve and contribute to the group to achieve its absolute best, you will find yourself having discussions with staff to discuss how this attitude is affecting the entire group.

2.0 - BAND / ENSEMBLE MEMBERSHIP POLICY

2.0 The membership in the Belle Vernon Area High School Band Program is divided into three groups: Musicians, Auxiliary (Colorguard, Dance Team, Majorettes), and Managers.

2.1 **Musicians:** All student musicians must be in grades 9-12 at Belle Vernon Area High School. For musicians, marching band is an extracurricular activity. All musicians are required to schedule Concert or Symphonic Band during the school day, as our program runs year-round. The only exception to this is those students who attend the Central Westmoreland Career and Technology Center, as you will only be able to schedule your four core classes within your schedule at BVAHS. Musicians can be “docked” for their performance in a show and can be removed from performing for a given number of performances for lack of attendance, poor performance or anything the director deems negatively affecting the group.

2.2 It is strongly encouraged that all musicians have proper musical training/instruction on their chosen instrument before joining the marching band and band program. This means completion of middle school band or recommendation from the middle school band director or private instructor.

2.3 **Auxiliary:** All students in grades 9-12 at Belle Vernon Area High School are eligible to audition for one of our auxiliary squads. For auxiliary squad members, marching band is an extracurricular activity. Retention of membership is solely based on your audition. Once the audition is passed (minimum 70% score) students will be selected by audition rank until all spots are filled based on a predetermined number of spots. Auditions will be held using judges / clinicians from outside of the marching band staff. Auxiliary members can be “docked” for their performance in a show and can be removed for a given number of performances for lack of attendance, poor performance or anything the director or auxiliary instructor deems negatively affecting the group. Auditions are final. Additionally, the size of the Colorguard, Dance Team and Majorettes is based on a percentage of the number of instrumentalists in the marching band.

2.4 **Managers:** All students in grades 9-12 at Belle Vernon Area High School are eligible to apply for the position of manager. Up to six managers will be selected for any given year for marching band, depending on the need of the marching band. Applicants will be required to interview with the director. Upon passing the interview, students will be assigned the position of manager. Student managers are held accountable for performance of manager duties as assigned by the band director.

2.5 **For ALL Members:** Membership in the band program is a privilege, not a right. Any conduct deemed inappropriate, in violation of any expectations or rules set forth in this handbook or district student handbook, or not contributing to the overall good of the group / program, is subject to discipline within the band by the director. All members are expected to have and keep acceptable attendance records both in school and marching band rehearsals, camp and performances. All members are required to have and keep an acceptable discipline record in school. If you are disciplined for any reason, there will be discipline within the band as the director sees appropriate. Lastly, all members are expected to have and maintain their grades to an acceptable GPA. Your schoolwork should be a priority, and you are expected to submit all coursework, or make up exams / projects, in a timely manner.

2.6 **Leadership Positions:** Students must have two consecutive years in the same section of the Leopard Marching Band in order to apply for a leadership position. Band Officers will only be selected from the senior class unless all positions are not filled. All applicants will be required to complete the entire application process in order to be considered. If a student quits the Belle Vernon Area High School Marching Band for any reason, they forfeit any chance of being considered for leadership positions for the remainder of their high school career.

3.0 - GENERAL CONDUCT

NOTE: All district rules outlined in the Belle Vernon Area High School Student Handbook are in effect at all rehearsals, performances and trips.

3.1 Members of a prestigious organization such as the Leopard Marching Band are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a decorous manner and to exercise common sense.

3.2 All members are expected to follow the instruction of any teacher, instructor, chaperone, or student leader without question unless said instruction violates civil or moral law. Should you be displeased with what is being requested, follow the request first, then, when the time is appropriate, bring your dissatisfaction to the attention of the band director.

3.3 Members should not play on or play with the instruments or equipment of others. Unfamiliarity leads to potential damage and a general lack of respect for the belongings of others. If you see someone picking up an instrument or equipment that is not theirs, remind them.

3.4 Members should not remove, play with, "hide" or take all or parts of the uniforms or instruments of others. The uniform is an obviously important part of our performance presentation. If you have a problem with your uniform, don't take someone else's. See your section leader or the director. Take care of your uniform! If you see someone doing something with their own or another's uniform that they should not, tell them and then report it to the band director.

3.5 Members should show respect for others by being judicious in displays of affection. An impassioned embrace is more properly given in privacy rather than when with a group. Your guideline should be: "Would my parents be embarrassed if they were here?" and, "Would anyone who is here be embarrassed?"

3.6 Anytime there is a critical incident or incidents involving police agencies or other authorities, the band director is to be notified immediately.

3.7 Members must take care to not get into any private vehicle from the time they arrive for a rehearsal, performance or trip until the time that they are released from the rehearsal, performance or trip. This is especially important when we are on site at a performance or on an overnight trip. Regardless of who it is, friend, relative or someone "friendly", do NOT get into a private vehicle.

3.8 Whenever we are on site at a performance or on an overnight trip, band members should move from place to place in groups. You are not permitted to be alone at any time.

3.9 Whenever we are on site at a performance or on an overnight trip, band members are not to leave the site. Do not take it upon yourself to take off and explore.

3.10 Any injury that occurs from the time you arrive for any rehearsal, performance or trip until such time as you are released from that rehearsal, performance or trip must be reported to the band director immediately.

3.11 There will be no smoking, vaping, or use of alcohol by any band member at any band activity, function or trip.

3.12 Members who conduct themselves in a boisterous manner at rehearsals, performances or on trips will be asked to refrain from such or be removed from the group.

3.13 Band members in possession of, use of, or distribution of controlled substance(s) will be disciplined according to the Belle Vernon Area School District Drug/Alcohol Policy. Possession of, use of, or distribution of a controlled substance(s) will also result in dismissal from the organization.

3.14 Any social media that defames, degrades, and / or brings negativity to any student, staff, booster, or the Belle Vernon Area High School Marching Band, Music Department and Belle Vernon Area School District as a whole, will result in suspension from the activity and potential dismissal from the organization altogether.

4.0 - REHEARSALS

4.1 It is necessary for us to maximize our rehearsal time in order to achieve our performance goals.

4.2 The rehearsal schedule is normally set well in advance, allowing adequate time to plan other activities and obligations around the established schedule.

4.3 Our goal of true excellence in performance can only be reached if each band member looks at the rehearsal as the means to that end. A band member missing a rehearsal not only does not improve, but those on either side of him/her will have a largely fruitless rehearsal because of the absence. Everyone is important!

4.4 It is imperative that band members be at ALL rehearsals except when prevented by significant personal illness or true family emergency. Students are expected to plan personal and family activities around the rehearsal schedule. While homework is very important, band members must learn to budget their time in order to accomplish their homework and still make rehearsal obligations. This may require starting homework earlier than you are accustomed or working later some evenings, but it can be done without a great deal of difficulty by carefully planning your time. Homework is not an acceptable excuse for missing rehearsal; rehearsal is not an acceptable excuse for not doing homework!

4.5 Being on time for the start of rehearsals is a necessity. Plan your departure time from home and any carpooling to arrive at school well before the start of rehearsal. Getting out on time requires that we start on time!

4.6 Everyone shares in the responsibility of setting up for rehearsal and helping to clear the area afterwards. Setting up yard markers, ladder, podium, sound equipment and percussion equipment is considerably easier when everyone pitches in to help. We help ourselves by expediting setup and cleanup and have a feeling of contributing to the betterment of the whole.

4.7 It is important that we respect and appreciate the facility that has been made available to us for rehearsal and take care of it appropriately. Do not leave paper or other trash on the floor or walls. It takes only a little more effort to see that it gets into the proper receptacle. If we all help here, we won't have any problems and we will all benefit from clean and pleasant surroundings.

4.8 It is important that no one engage in any destructive activity. Sometimes this can be an all but conscious act like playing on a wall, locker or door with drumsticks or bumping things with horns or equipment. Other times it is a more overt act such as throwing drumsticks at the ceiling, throwing food or gum at a wall, stopping up drains in a washroom sink or drinking fountain. A really classy organization with mature members will have none of this. It is everyone's responsibility to see that these things do not occur. If you see it, stop it. If they won't stop, inform the band director immediately.

4.9 It is important that everyone be sensitive to the security of the band room, individual belongings and the school building. Do not leave purses and other valuables in the band room or any other room unsecured. If you see anyone in the band room or anywhere in the building that is the least suspicious or out of place, inform the band director, another staff person or school official immediately. Security is everyone's business.

4.10 Underclassmen may have an upperclassman assigned to them as a tutor to help with music and/or marching skills. If you are having problems, don't pull away, ask for help. Everyone involved wants the group to be better, and that will only happen by everyone taking the responsibility for improvement.

4.11 Every band member is expected to have his/her instrument in working order and all other materials at all rehearsals. Pride and progress go hand in hand with preparation. Be ready for rehearsal!

4.12 The summer rehearsal schedule is published well in advance. Summer rehearsals serve three functions. First, they keep everyone playing their instrument. Second, we continue to develop musically while getting to know one another better and, third, they enable us to learn the music for the Fall so that when we get to band camp we can concentrate on the integration of the marching and music facets of our show. These rehearsals are very important. We need to have everyone who is not on vacation present for all of the rehearsals. This is where we can really make a difference in our preparation!

4.13 **BAND CAMP REHEARSALS ARE MANDATORY.** Students who cannot be present for band camp will not be permitted to perform on the field until they demonstrate complete knowledge of their drill spot and music. The Band Camp time is absolutely critical! Not knowing your drill makes one a liability to those around them.

4.14 The regular rehearsal schedule for the marching band after the start of the school year is Tuesdays and Thursdays after school until 5:00 p.m. There will be a Friday rehearsal before all home games for at least one hour. The process of cleaning the show, improving bit by bit, and learning new material requires careful work. Here is where we get that work done.

4.15 Because of our limited rehearsal time, it is necessary that the marching band rehearse regardless of the weather. Band members should dress accordingly. If there is drizzle or intermittent light rain, we will often march. Very hot weather will not keep us from rehearsing, but may cause us to take more frequent breaks. Cold weather is a seasonal hazard in our climate and will not prevent us from rehearsing. We must often perform under similar conditions! We will not normally rehearse outdoors in a heavy rain, but will rehearse indoors and go out at the first opportunity. Rehearsals are never canceled because of the weather. Again, dress for the weather!

4.16 Any student who is involved in a fall / spring sport / activity that conflicts with marching band is expected to create a schedule that allows equal time for both activities and keep open communication with your coach / sponsor and marching band director.

5.0 PERFORMANCES

5.1 Our numerous performance opportunities include: Football games, Parades, Marching Band Festivals or Contests, Band Concerts, and Small Ensemble Performances.

FOOTBALL GAMES

5.2 The Leopard Marching Band plays for all home and away football games. For home games the band marches into the stadium as a group, performs the National Anthem and Alma Mater at Pregame, plays the Fight Song as the team comes on the field and then sits together in the stands to support the efforts of the team. At halftime we

will perform our halftime show or other material prepared for the football halftime presentation and return to the stands to sit through the second half as a group. At the conclusion of the game, we will join the team and cheerleaders on the field for the playing of our Alma Mater. For away games, the band travels to the game site together and sits together in the stands for both halves of the ball game.

5.3 When we are at football games, band members are expected to conduct themselves in a decorous manner. The uniform will stay complete and neat unless the band director instructs otherwise. Band members will check with the band director when it is necessary for them to go to the washroom or to leave the seating area for any reason. Only a few students will be dismissed at any one time and these students must be accompanied by a chaperone. Refer to 3.0.

5.4 During cold weather, the director and staff will encourage students to bring all mandatory wear, in addition to heavy gloves and heavy coats, warm blankets and such for protection against the weather.

PARADES

5.5 Parades are a necessary part of our activity as they serve a community function and give us exposure within our immediate area. We normally participate in parades only in our local area. We attempt to keep the number of parades and the amount of time involved to a minimum. Typically, we participate in the Halloween, Veteran's Day, and Memorial Day Parades. When special one-time community parades come up, they are considered on an individual basis.

MARCHING BAND FESTIVALS

5.6 The marching band festival is a very special part of the marching band experience at Belle Vernon Area High School. We have a history of excellence and are highly regarded by our peers. The success of the Leopard Marching Band is the result of much hard work by hundreds of Leopard Marching Band members through the years.

5.7 The festival experience carries with it a tremendous amount of emotion at times. Because of the amount of time, work and discipline necessary to produce a top-level band, we become very close to one another. We share hardship, discomfort, at times unending tedium, fatigue, oppressive heat, chilling cold, long bus rides, disappointment, tears, joy and success.

5.8 When we attend festivals, it is part of our responsibilities as performers to support each band that performs that evening. All outstanding performers are also outstanding audience members, meaning that we behave in the stands the same way we'd want the audience to act when we perform.

5.9 Our image depends upon every individual. Our public manner, appearance and projection of pride (our posture) and organization are everyone's responsibility. How we act in public, whether it be at festivals, football games, school, or the general public, is always a reflection of the Belle Vernon Area High School Marching Band, High School, School District, and your families.

BAND CONCERTS

5.10 The Belle Vernon Area High School Marching Band performs at the annual Fall concert each year (instrumentalists only).

6.0 - ATTENDANCE

6.1 Attendance at all rehearsals and performances is expected. The only excuses acceptable are significant personal illness or true family emergency. Band members are expected to adjust their schedules and do homework around the rehearsal and performance schedule [see Rehearsals (4.4)]. The only additional excuse for missing a performance is the wedding of an immediate family member. There are two types of absences: Excused & Unexcused. Unexcused absences will result in performance suspension or termination of membership from the band, loss of “lettering” each year (receiving your bar), and missing out on social events hosted by the boosters. Should you have a transportation problem, have a backup available such as a band member who lives nearby who could pick you up. It is your responsibility to see to your transportation.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

6.2 If a student must miss a scheduled rehearsal or performance, it is the student’s responsibility to email the director at least two weeks in advance. The email correspondence will serve as an excuse form. Verbal communication will not be accepted as a valid form of communication. The director reserves the right to dispute the request of a member to be absent, to ensure the policy is not abused. (Please note: *Excuses must be more specific than claiming students will be “out of town”.*) Emergencies will be dealt with on an individual basis for the protection of the member’s eligibility. Students are permitted three total absences for the season.

6.3 Students who find they must be absent from a rehearsal or a performance due to a true family emergency or significant illness should email the band director prior to the report time. Please fill out an excuse form upon returning to the band if the emergency is unexpected. A student will be excused from a rehearsal or performance if they are ill or injured and the absence is accompanied by a doctor’s excuse verifying that the illness or injury prohibits the member from participating in the specific band activity. *Telling a friend to tell Mr. Surovchak is not acceptable.*

6.4 It is necessary that all members be prompt for all rehearsals and performances. "On time" is late. Early is on time. We achieve our absolute best when everyone is present and ready to begin before rehearsal even starts.

6.5 If a student comes to rehearsal or a performance without proper equipment, uniform, or materials the individual will receive an “unexcused absence” for the event and the consequence (6.8 / 6.20) may be applied.

6.6 Attendance will be taken at the indicated starting time for all rehearsals or pre-performance meetings by all section leaders. Please familiarize yourself with the Belle Vernon Area School District attendance policy when it comes to extracurricular activities.

6.7 Jobs are not a reason for missing rehearsals. The band schedule is published months in advance to allow you time to adjust your work schedule. If you get a last-minute call to fill in at work on a rehearsal or performance date, simply tell them you are not available at that time due to a prior commitment. See Mr. Surovchak for a written excuse if needed.

6.8 The director, at his discretion, may suspend a student for one or more performances for failure to attend rehearsals, or revoke/suspend letter status.

6.9 All students are required to ride district transportation to and from all performances and football games with the Belle Vernon Area High School Marching Band.

EARLY DISMISSAL/LATE ARRIVAL FROM REHEARSALS

6.10 All members of the band are required to attend all rehearsals and performances of the Belle Vernon Area High School Marching Band in their entirety. A student will be excused from a rehearsal or performance if they are ill or injured and the absence is accompanied by a doctor's excuse verifying that the illness or injury prohibits the member from participating in the specific band activity. Regular doctor's appointments (wellness visits and dental appointments) are NOT excused. Members may also be excused from a rehearsal or performance if there is a death in their family. All other absences should be considered unexcused unless prior consent is given by the band director.

6.10.1 Students who are members of school sponsored fall sports teams may be excused from a rehearsal if they have a game or meet that directly conflicts with a band rehearsal. Students are expected to attend as much of that band rehearsal as they can if the schedule allows. Students are expected to share their time between band and the school sport. Students must attend one rehearsal with a full run through of the show in order to be eligible to march in a performance. Students who fail to meet this obligation will not perform but will still be required to play in the stands. This applies to sports and absences in general from marching band rehearsal. See 4.16.

6.11 Usually, sports teams practice every day of the week, except when they have games or meets. The marching band only rehearses twice each week. Therefore, band members who are on sports teams are expected to meet with their coach and Mr. Surovchak to discuss the plan for working with both organizations. Shared, equal time is expected.

6.12 Generally, band performances are scheduled around school sponsored sports schedules. In the event that there is a conflict between a band performance and athletic game or meet, the director and coach will work it out on an individual basis however; you must notify both the coach and Mr. Surovchak of the conflict as soon as it is made known. If a sporting event is rescheduled from its original date to the date of a band performance, the student is required to attend the band performance without exception.

6.13 Students who choose to take advantage of the various tutoring programs available at the high school are expected to report to band practice at the end of the tutoring session or 3:30 pm at the latest.

6.14 Students who have to take the SAT exam on a Saturday morning following an away football game may be excused early from that game if we are a far distance from Belle Vernon Area. If we are playing a local team, we will more than likely return at a reasonable time that will allow students to get home in time to get a good night's rest.

6.15 Students with after school jobs are never, ever excused from any part of a band rehearsal or performance to go to work. It is the student's responsibility to provide their work schedule maker with our entire rehearsal and performance schedule well ahead of time to avoid conflicts.

6.16 Students who are involved in music groups outside of school are not excused from band performances to attend other performances or rehearsals.

6.17 Seniors will not be excused from band camp or other rehearsals to have their senior pictures taken. Our schedule is available well in advance. There is no need to miss rehearsal for pictures. Please plan accordingly.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE ABSENT FROM SCHOOL DURING A PERFORMANCE OR REHEARSAL DAY

6.18 If a student is absent from school due to a doctor's visit, surgery, or funeral the student must present an official excuse (not a parent excuse) and can be permitted to attend a practice or performance. If the student does not meet the above-mentioned criteria that student is not permitted to participate in any rehearsal or performance. In addition, that student is not permitted to attend any extra-curricular activity either as performer or spectator as is stated in the high school student handbook.

ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES

6.19 Any band member with 95% or higher attendance is eligible for the following possible incentives:

- letterman's jacket / letter / senior eligibility
- pin / bar for letterman's jacket
- first selection of uniform
- end of season / year banquet

6.20 Being a member of the Belle Vernon Area High School Leopard Marching Band does not automatically entitle you to receive a letterman's jacket at the boosters' expense after the completion of two full years in the marching band. Your attendance will play a major role in the incentives that are offered to you.

GENERAL ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

6.21 While the attendance policy is in place to discourage unexcused absences, it is our hope all students will understand the importance of faithful attendance at *every* Belle Vernon Area High School Marching Band event. In the end, the overall quality of the Leopard Marching Band will be determined by the dedication of the students involved.

6.22 Violation of any Attendance rules/procedures could possibly result in suspension from performance, revoking of band jacket / letter status, and/or revoke membership in any/all bands at Belle Vernon Area High School.

UNIFORM CARE

Your uniform and appearance are symbolic of your pride in yourself and this organization. Treat your uniform with care at all times. Please keep it clean and hang it carefully in your garment bag at all times, unless it is wet. Uniforms may be dry-cleaned or machine washed (following uniform instructions), with the exception of the auxiliaries. Aside from the school-issued uniform, you will also be required to wear the marching band shoes offered (student expense, but you usually only need one pair for all of high school), and plain black socks that cover your calves. Your uniform will be inspected prior to departure for every performance. The following standards will go into effect as far as uniform inspection is concerned:

What To Do In Uniform:

- Walk in pairs (e.g. when going to the restroom)
- Double knot shoes
- Always wear full uniform (unless instructed by director)
- Gloves, gauntlets, shakos, and jacket must be put on or taken off when instructed to by directors

What Not To Do In Uniform:

- No running in uniform
- No eating in uniform (except 3rd quarter snack or where authorized by directors)
- No inappropriate language
- No jewelry (e.g. earrings, necklaces, bracelets, watches, etc.)
- No bandanas or thick headbands
- No sunglasses (unless authorized by directors)

What Should Be In Hat Box:

- Shako
- Gloves
- Gauntlets
- Flip folder
- Lyre
- Nothing else is permitted in the hat box, especially food of any kind.

Gloves/Gauntlets:

- When not being worn gloves should be in pants pockets. Gloves should be put in the hat box for transport.
- When not being worn gauntlets should be attached to suspenders on the back. Gauntlets should be ROLLED (never folded) and put in the hat box for transport.

Shakos (band hat):

To wear your shako correctly,

- Place two fingers flat on your nose and pull the brim down until the brim touches your fingers.
- If you wear glasses, pull the brim down until the brim touches the top of your glasses.
- Adjust string inside so that the shako touches the top of your ears
- Adjust chin strap so that it fits securely underneath chin at all times while wearing shako.
- Forehead must not be visible.

When not wearing shako,

- Put it in the hat box.
- If the hat box is not available then place shako in front of you, right side up, with brim facing forward, and chin strap pulled behind.
- Shako should never be upside down.
- When carrying shako, you must carry in the left hand with 3 fingers over brim and thumb and pinky underneath.
- Never carry shako upside down or use it as a bucket to carry other items.

Pants:

- Lightweight properly fitting athletic shorts are to be worn underneath the pants (not thick or oversized).
- Pants are either completely on or completely off as instructed by directors.
- Suspenders should be up over the shoulders.
- Pants should always be zipped
- Pants should fit with a tailored look (not baggy or loose)

- Suspenders should be tightened enough so that the crotch of the pants is in the correct position.
- Hem of the pants should be adjusted so that the pants touch the top of the shoe without a break in the crease.
- Students should never ever under any circumstance take the suspenders off, unzip the pants, and roll down the top of the pants so that they are around the waist.
- When not worn, pants must be properly placed on a hanger (creases matching) and in the garment bag.

Jackets:

- Jackets are completely on or completely off as instructed by directors.
- Students should never walk around with their uniform unzipped.
- Jackets must be fully zipped. The one exception is that jackets must be halfway unzipped during uniform inspection so that we can check to make sure students have the correct t-shirt on underneath their jacket. Jackets must be zipped before students leave the band hall.
- When not wearing your jacket, it must be on a hanger in your garment bag or folded correctly and placed on top of the shako.
- Your uniform should never touch the ground. The one exception will be that pit and tubas will turn their jackets inside out and then fold them and place them on the ground.
- When carrying your shako and folded uniform, place the folded uniform on your left forearm underneath the shako (use shako to hold the jacket in place).

Hair:

- Long hair must be tied back when not wearing shakos.
- When wearing shakos, all hair must be up inside the shako.
- Hair must not extend below the top of the jacket's collar. Hair must not cover ears. Bangs must not be visible under the brim. This should be checked before game day.
- All students (male and female) whose hair is not short, must use thin black hair ties, thin black headband, bobby pins, and/or hair spray to keep their hair up inside their shako. Alternatively, students can get a haircut.
- No excessive makeup, extreme hairstyles as determined by the director, or any other decorations that may detract from uniformity are allowed.

On the following pages, students and parents will find the Zero Tolerance Policy, Parent & Student Code of Conduct, and Medical Forms. The last page of this handbook will have a student and parent sign-off form stating that you have read and understood the contents of this handbook. This form is due before the first full day of band camp.

BELLE VERNON AREA MARCHING BAND

ZERO TOLERANCE BULLYING, FIGHTING & WEAPONS, TOBACCO, DRUG, ALCOHOL POLICY

This Zero Tolerance, Bullying, Fighting & Weapons, Tobacco, drug and alcohol policy is to ensure the safety of your child and all other students.

Please read the following information carefully. All policies set forth below apply during practices and band events (football games, band festivals), the spring trip, any organized Marching Band activities (whether taking place on school property or not), and transportation. All students **MUST** adhere to all district rules at all times.

THE MARCHING BAND HAS A ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY WITH REGARD TO THE FOLLOWING:

● BULLYING

Initiations, hazing, or bullying of any kind **IS PROHIBITED**. This includes actions displayed on all forms of social media and technology (Twitter, Facebook, texting, etc). Refer to the Social Media Policy below for details about bullying on Social Media. Any student involved in hazing, initiation, or bullying of another student will face disciplinary action.

In the event that a student becomes aware of any situation involving these types of behaviors, they must report it to the band director, instructor, or chaperone immediately so that it can be addressed in a timely manner.

If a student is found to have participated in initiations, hazing, or bullying, discipline will be handled by the Band Director and staff, and may result in dismissal from the marching band.

● FIGHTING & WEAPONS

Acts against persons or property which may endanger the health or safety of others **IS PROHIBITED**. **EXAMPLES include:** Fighting, Assault/Battery, Vandalism, Stealing, Threats to others, verbal or sexual harassment or coercion. Possession and /or use of fireworks, smoke bombs or other such devices, Bomb Threats, False alarms and /or tampering with fire control equipment, Student demonstration, boycotts or walkouts, Ethnic intimidation, profane language, Truancy, Possession and/or distribution of pornographic material, Disorderly conduct, Possession and /or transfer of dangerous weapons.

- **TOBACCO PRODUCTS AND VAPING**

Smoking, use of smokeless tobacco, or vaping by students on school property (including school buses) at any organized Marching Band activity **IS PROHIBITED.**

- **DRUGS, CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES, ILLEGAL DRUGS & ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES**

Furnishing, Selling and /or possession of drugs, lookalike substances or alcohol, being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, Possession or transfer of drug-related paraphernalia **IS PROHIBITED.**

The use and/or possession of controlled substances and prescription drugs (in the absence of a legitimate prescription of which proper notification is given to the Marching Band Booster organization) **IS PROHIBITED.** Drugs and controlled substances are defined by the Laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The policy also applies to look-a-like substances.

- a. **Controlled Substances:** A drug, substance or immediate precursor included in Schedule I through V of the Pennsylvania Drug Policies. Examples of such controlled substances are marijuana, opiates and other narcotics.
- b. **Drugs:** As defined in the Pennsylvania Drug Policies and including substances intended for use in the diagnosis, cure, mitigation, treatment or prevention of disease in man or other animals.
- c. **Prescription Drugs:** Those drugs pursuant to federal law may be dispensed only upon prescription from a physician.
- d. **Illegal Drugs:** Those drugs the use or possession of which are illegal under state or federal law, including, but not limited to, marijuana.
- e. **Alcoholic Beverages:** A liquid for consumption with a percentage alcoholic content including, but not limited to, liquor, beer and wine.

NOTE: A student is in violation of this policy even if the prescription drug has been legitimately prescribed by a licensed physician or health care practitioner, if the student has not notified the Marching Band Nurse of the prescribed drug or medication in accordance with the procedures of the school and/or the organization, and the use and possession of that legitimately prescribed drug or medication and the student's authority to use and/or possess it has not been verified by the student's parent and/or legal guardian prior to the event or trip.

Any Student in violation of this policy relating to Tobacco Products, Drugs (prescription drugs or non-prescription drugs), Controlled Substances, Alcoholic Beverages, Fighting & Weapons or Bullying are subject to discipline by the School under the District Discipline Code. Violations of this policy may be referred to the District Magistrate for prosecution and may be punishable by a civil fine as set forth in applicable law.

Any Student in violation of the above Zero Tolerance Policy during the spring band trip ***WILL BE IMMEDIATELY SENT HOME.*** Parent/Guardian will be responsible for picking up their student from **ANY DESTINATION.** The student must be picked up within a 12-hour period from the time of notification of the parent or guardian of the breach of the zero-tolerance policy. Pending the transfer of custody of the student to his or her parent or guardian, the student shall remain under the supervision of the Director, staff member, chaperone or security guard at all times, during which time the student shall not be permitted to join other classmates in the band activities.

- **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

A student in the marching band is a representative of their band, their high school, and their school district and is expected to portray themselves in a positive manner. All students are responsible for their own behavior when using social media and will be held accountable for the content and communication made on social media outlets when such content and communication is related to the marching band. Examples of social media outlets include Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, Facebook, etc.

Prohibited behaviors include but are not limited to:

Cyberbullying directed towards bandmates, students, coaches, and opposing schools

- Comments intended to harass or bully bandmates, students, coaches, or opponents in our district or any other.
- Derogatory language regarding bandmates, students, coaches, or opponents in our district or any other.
- Explicit, profane, sexual, or defamatory language/actions directed towards bandmates, students, coaches, or opponents in our district or any other.
- Threats of violence or harm directed at bandmates, students, coaches, or opponents in our district or any other.

Students who violate this policy will face disciplinary action. These consequences will be determined on an individual basis and are at the discretion of the Band Director, Principal, or Superintendent.

This policy is to protect your child and any other students under our supervision. Our goal is for every student to have a safe and enjoyable marching band season.

All marching band students will abide by the current school discipline Code of Conduct. Seeing that participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege and not a right, that privilege can be taken away from a student if that student does not comply with the policies and procedures described in this policy.

BELLE VERNON AREA MARCHING BAND

**ZERO TOLERANCE BULLYING, FIGHTING & WEAPONS, TOBACCO, DRUG,
ALCOHOL POLICY**

I have read and understand the zero tolerance policy for bullying. I will not engage in any form of bullying.

Student Initial: _____

I have read and understand the zero tolerance policy for weapons and fighting. I will not endanger anyone or destroy any property.

Student Initial: _____

I have read and understand the zero tolerance policy for tobacco products. I will not utilize tobacco or vaping products.

Student Initial: _____

I have read and understand the zero tolerance policy for drugs and alcohol. I will adhere to the policy and will inform the band director/band boosters of any prescribed medication.

Student Initial: _____

I have read and understand the handbook and its contents, and understand my responsibility as a member to uphold these policies to help provide a positive experience for not only myself, but all members of the BVAHS Marching Band.

Student Initial: _____

By signing this document, I understand and agree to the terms and conditions stated in the zero tolerance policy and handbook:

STUDENT PRINT NAME: _____

DATE: _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN PRINT NAME: _____

DATE: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Belle Vernon Area Marching Band

Parent Code of Conduct

It is expected that all individuals affiliated with the Belle Vernon Marching Band adhere to codes of conduct during all practices and performances. Belle Vernon Area School District has a zero tolerance policy toward any unsportsmanlike behavior toward the students and instructors.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:

As a parent/guardian:

1. I will encourage my student(s) to fully commit by attending all practices and performances. I will encourage hard work and honest effort that will lead to improved performance of the individual and band as a whole.
2. I will respect the band director, instructors, coaches, and chaperones and their authority during ALL practices, performances, and band activities. I will not question or confront the director, instructors, or coaches before, during, or after a practice or performance. If I have an issue that needs to be discussed, I will contact the director via email.
3. I will conduct myself in a positive manner that sets a good example for our students. I will place the emotional and physical well-being of our students ahead of my personal goals and desires. I will remember that marching band is for the students and not the parents.
4. I will not engage in any of the following behaviors in person or on social media:
 - a. Cyberbullying directed towards band members, students, coaches, instructors, or chaperones.
 - b. Comments intended to harass or bully band members, coaches, instructors, or chaperones.
 - c. Derogatory language regarding band members, coaches, instructors, or chaperones.
 - d. Explicit, profane, sexual, or defamatory language/actions directed toward band members, coaches, instructors, or chaperones.
 - e. Threats of violence or harm directed at band members, coaches, instructors, or chaperones.
5. I understand that all practices are off limits to parents. Only chaperones, board members, and volunteers with a specific purpose should be present.

Parents/guardians are also a representative of the band, the school, and the district. If a parent violates the code of conduct as established by the Belle Vernon School District, they will face disciplinary action.

Possible parent consequences include:

- Verbal warning
- Banned from attending band related events
- Removal of student from the marching band

More detailed information can be found in the BVA Student Athletic Handbook.

I have reviewed and understand the Parent Code of Conduct. I understand that if I break this policy, I will be subject to the punishment described therein. I have been given a copy of the policy and have signed this acknowledgement which shall be kept on file.

Student Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____