

Hernando Middle School Bands

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

Principal – Jennifer Hodges

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 not play their instruments without permission during rehearsal.
4. Students will not bring any food, drinks, gum or candy into the band hall. Water is fine and encouraged.
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 quietly and orderly.
2. Students must be seated with all needed equipment one minute following the tardy bell.
3. All items not needed for the rehearsal should be left in the designated areas of the hallway.
4. The band director will dismiss students from class. **The bell does not dismiss the class, the teacher does.**

Grading Policy

Tests- 50%

Each required 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. The school policy for makeup work will be followed in the event of an absence on a test day.

Passoffs- 15%

Students are assigned weekly pass off assignments that are to be completed outside of school and turned in via Schoology. Pass off assignments turned in on time will receive a 100. Assignments turned in a day late will receive a 50, and a 0 will be given after that point.

Participation - 35%

Students will receive a weekly participation grade. To earn full credit, the student must bring his/her instrument and necessary materials, come to class on time, and participate in class by being ready to play. If the student fails to achieve one or more items on the list above, their weekly participation grade will be lowered.

Playing Test Evaluation

Middle School Band is a group participation activity where students learn musical skills in a controlled setting. Although most instruction for middle school band students takes place in a group setting, the students are evaluated often and individually through playing tests. ***Practice time at home is a direct reflection of the students' playing ability.***

During a playing test, students will start with a 100. Points will be taken for mistakes made. Exact point amounts will vary based on the severity of the mistake.

Supplies Needed for Band

Each student enrolled in middle school band is expected to have the following supplies for each class:

1. 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 the performance standards of the Hernando Band. Used instruments should be approved by the directors.)*
2. 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 *(Available for free)*
5. Flip Folder/Lyre for your instrument *(Symphonic Band woodwinds and brass only)*

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 parent contact
 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 hall 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. Students should take their instrument home at the end of the school day. No instruments should be left in the school overnight.
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.**

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 school year. Please see the financial information on the next page for more information on how to pay. 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.

Performance Attire

All students will need concert-appropriate clothes for their performances.

For the outdoor performance on Band Night in November, students should wear a black Hernando t-shirt (plain black is fine), blue jeans, and dark tennis shoes. This also applies for Symphonic Band members performing at the HMS football games.

For the indoor performances (Winter Concert, Spring Concert, and Solo Festival), students should wear their concert attire. For Beginning Band and Concert Band students, this means nicer dress clothes (think business casual or better). For Symphonic Band, this means all black dress clothes. Jeans, joggers, sweatpants, shorts, t-shirts, etc. are not appropriate for concert attire.

Financial Information

Some students will have fees that must be paid to the school (i.e. school-owned instruments, honor bands, indoor percussion). All fees will be paid to the school via cash, check, money order, or online payment (OSP). Checks should be made payable to Hernando Middle School. ***Please note: participation in the HMS band should not be discouraged based on finances. Please communicate any issues to the band directors.***

Fundraising

All band students are asked to help with fundraising. Fundraising is a crucial part of our band program's success. You will have many opportunities to help raise money for the band, and the money raised will be spent directly on benefits for the students, including music, new instruments, equipment, and supplies.

Additional Opportunities

There will be a few additional opportunities throughout the year for our older students to participate in if they would like. 7th and 8th grade band students will be able to audition for various Honor Bands during the year. 8th grade band students will also have the opportunity to accompany the Hernando High School Band on their spring trip. More information about these opportunities will be sent home in the future.

Attendance Policy

Please see our Important Date Sheet to see all performance dates for the year. 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, a director should be emailed for notification as soon as possible. **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.

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 2026-2027 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 AND RETURN BY FRIDAY, AUGUST 7.** Your completed form confirms that you have read, understand, and are willing to comply with 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
Jennifer Hodges, Principal

HMS Band Handbook Form

We have read, understood, and will abide by the responsibilities, obligations, and policies of a band member and band parent (booster) as stated in this handbook.

Student Information

Student Name (Print): _____

Grade: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent Information

Parent Name (Print): _____

Parent Email: _____

Parent Phone: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____