



# Sound of Suwannee Marching Band

## Suwannee High School Band 2024-2025 Handbook

Clayton McPeak, Band Director  
Sean Conner, Assistant Band Director  
Abigail Rodriguez, Dancing Dolls Director  
Beth Southerland, Majorettes Director

[clayton.mcpeak@scsb.us](mailto:clayton.mcpeak@scsb.us)  
[abigail.rodriguez@suwannee.k12.fl.us](mailto:abigail.rodriguez@suwannee.k12.fl.us)  
[martha.southerland@suwannee.k12.fl.us](mailto:martha.southerland@suwannee.k12.fl.us)

## Forward

Welcome to the Suwannee High School Band Program! It is the goal of this organization to harbor talented musicians and develop them into outstanding model citizens. This activity is unique: whole group success can *only* be achieved through teamwork and commitment. There is no other activity in which individual success so incredibly determines the success of the whole. There are no stars, just as there are no weak-links. It is essential for each member to be equally committed to the overall success of the program. With that being said, band should be and will be an enjoyable activity, which will develop life-long friendships and build valuable life-skills. We will work hard, but in the end, we will lift each other up and celebrate our accomplishments.

## Core Concepts

**Musicality:** It is the goal of the Suwannee High School band program to promote musicality in every member. Each student will learn technical proficiency on their own instrument, performance abilities within a group, be able to hear the ensemble and themselves, and know how to make improvements.

**Discipline:** It is the belief of the directors and staff that high school band is a perfect environment for training for the real world. Discipline and professionalism are expected in the workplace; they too are in the school band.

**Organization:** Organization and planning are essential to every band student. With any activity such as this that involves so many outside commitments, it is very important to know exactly where to be and when to be there. ***Being informed is an intentional act***; the month's calendar will be posted at the beginning of each month so that everyone knows where they have to be. Should any scheduled event require changes, parents will receive notification with enough time to make appropriate accommodations.

**Camaraderie:** An important aspect of any group activity is making and maintaining relationships with other students, learning valuable life skills such as teamwork and communication, and bolstering personal accountability.

## **The Band Director's Responsibility to the Student**

- Provide a safe environment for musical and educational growth that promotes learning and development.
- Give performing ensembles appropriate musical direction that aids specifically to the musical growth of the group.
- Post a detailed and specific calendar at the beginning of each month designating each outside rehearsal and performance. Weekly routines will be our form of consistency and should be the same from week to week.
- Ensure that no individual member, regardless of performing ensemble, grade level, or any other qualifier, feels at any way unwelcomed, unsafe, or treated unfairly. See rules and expectations for more.
- Supervise fairly and appropriately on all band trips, performances, and functions.

## **The Band Member's Responsibility to the Program**

- Be prepared. Be early. Be ready to work. Strive to improve.
- Work toward becoming responsible adults. Know where you need to be, when you need to be there, what you need to be wearing, and what you need to have with you.
- Follow all band rules and procedures, and be courteous and kind toward your fellow band member.
- Understand and respect rehearsal time, and make the most use of our limited time together.
- Respect the band room and equipment as if it were your own.

## **Band Camp and Rehearsals**

For more detailed information on Band Camp dates, please refer to "Band Camp Information".

Weekly marching band rehearsals will be held after school Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from **3:00 to 5:00pm**. Rehearsals will be both indoors and outdoors; **athletic clothes will be required for participation** (for details on the definition of athletic clothings, refer to Dress Code for Rehearsal section). Wednesday rehearsals will be from **3:00 to 4:00pm** and will be reserved for music and spot checking sections. Please be ready to pick-up your child or have another ride arranged at that time.

As stated earlier, a monthly rehearsal schedule will be put out at the beginning of each month. We will not stray from that schedule, unless requested by our school's administration. Please also see our weekly newsletter "Sound of Suwannee Noise" for a detailed list of events.

## Expectations and Procedures

When you are in the public eye and associated with the Sound of Suwannee Marching Band, you not only represent yourself, but you represent your school, your classmates, your directors, and your band. Your behavior in public is a reflection of the entire program.

- **All members will arrive prior to call time and be prepared for each rehearsal, performance, and commitment.** This includes (but is not limited to) being in your chair/spot at the time rehearsal begins (not walking toward it) and having everything you need for a successful rehearsal (including music, instrument, a pencil for indoor rehearsals, without having anything that might distract you).
- **Full attendance is essential for growth as a band.** Marching band is unique in that the absence of any member negatively impacts the rest of the group. Because of the extreme cooperative nature of the activity, full participation is second only to full attendance in importance. Contact the band director with absences that are known beforehand, either by email or phone. Understand that even excused absences still hurt the progress of the band; please avoid it at all possible. **Written notification is REQUIRED to be excused from a rehearsal or performance.**
- **During rehearsal, the primary task is the task at hand, and nothing else.** While in rehearsal, everyone should be focused on music, drill, or whatever else is being rehearsed on that particular day. This includes limiting talking, keeping distractions away, and engaging yourself during all instruction.
- **Respect the band room and the field:** no food, drink, gum, or trash. Food is allowed in hallways and other tiled areas only. Water is accepted and is encouraged; a bottle with a resealable cap is recommended.
- **Students are unable to participate in ANY band activities while suspended, either in ISS or OSS.** Suspension begins at the beginning of the school day, and does not end until the beginning of the next school day after the suspension is fulfilled. For instance, if an ISS-worthy act is committed on Thursday morning and you've been assigned ISS for Friday, you will still be expected to attend Thursday afternoon rehearsal, but will not be allowed at any band events until the following Monday morning. Suspensions extend into the evenings following. OSS are effective immediately for all functions until the permitted day to return to classes, regardless of any afternoon or weekend functions.
- **At all outdoor rehearsals, appropriate attire must be worn by all.** This includes:
  - **For Ladies:**
    - Shirts must be worn at all times, shoulders and midriffs must be covered.
    - Shorts of an appropriate length (fingertip rule applies)
    - Long athletic pants should be approved by your area captain BEFORE attempting to wear to rehearsal. Joggers/Leggings may be allowed, sweatpants are NOT.
    - Sleeveless shirts must have a 3-finger width shoulder strap.

- **For Gentlemen:**
  - Shirts must be worn at all times
  - Shorts must be of a decent length (no shorter than four inches above the knee).
  - Any long pants should be approved by your area captain BEFORE attempting to wear to rehearsal. Sweatpants/J Jeans are NOT allowed.
- **For All:**
  - Sturdy, athletic shoes must be worn WITH SOCKS. *Absolutely no sandals, crocs, or flip flops will be accepted.*
  - Hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen are strongly recommended..

Students not appropriately dressed for rehearsal will not be able to participate. Students will also be asked to call home for a change of clothes.

Consequences for failing to follow band expectations vary depending on the nature of the transgression. For instance, disrespect generally results in either active punishments (laps or pushups or scales), limiting or denial of 3rd Quarter privileges, which can be overseen by leadership. More severe issues warrant more severe consequences; hazing or physical aggression, for example, may result in either the removal from a performance, a game or dismissal from the program, depending on the severity.

*If a student is absent and at home sick on a Friday game day, it is expected that they will not attend that evening's football game. If they are too sick to go to school, then they're too sick for marching band extracurriculars. School approved absences will excuse all after-school activities for the given day.*

#### **Dress Code for Rehearsal:**

- A hat and/or sunglasses are heavily recommended
- Avoid dark colors as they absorb more heat from sunlight
- No heavy clothes, such as jackets or sweatpants, will be worn outside. Bringing a light jacket for inside wear is appropriate, but not for outside rehearsal. The band room gets cold.
- Absolutely no Jeans or baggy sweatpants. Jogging pants, if long, must be approved by an area captain or staff *before* the student attempts to wear them to rehearsal.
- Shorts of an athletic material are recommended, but other shorts, such as khaki cargo shorts, are acceptable. Denim shorts are unacceptable. Shorts must be school-length appropriate.
- Yoga pants/athletic leggings are allowed as long as they are knee length or longer. Short leggings may only be worn if loose fitting shorts are worn over. Form fitting shorts or leggings are not appropriate.

- **Each member of the Sound of Suwannee Marching Band must ALWAYS wear socks to rehearsal.** Athletic shoes are required; no sandals, slip-ons, or sock-less shoes, such as crocs. Also, no high-top shoes or boots, to prevent injury.

*Ask staff directly if there are any discrepancies, issues, or questions regarding dress code.*

### **Injury Policy:**

Students that become injured during the marching band season that limit their ability to march will be asked to remain in the program and play their instrument on the sideline for each performance. If the injury persists, the move to the sidelines may be permanent, as the student's inability to march their position then becomes a hindrance to the rest of the band.

### **Rehearsal and Performance Etiquette**

In conjunction with everything in this handbook, how we act in rehearsal and performance is a reflection of the entire program. Many of the expectations for rehearsal are discussed at length in the expectations and procedures section, but bear these in mind as well:

- **Water breaks should be quick and efficient.** Particularly on hot days, water breaks will occur more often. Please don't abuse this by socializing; we have work to do. Socializing is encouraged, but at appropriate times only.
- **Profanity and PDA is prohibited at all times while in association with the band.** Demerits are issued for infractions, and profanity while associated with the band incurs stricter punishment.
- At football games, **always be ready and equipped to play.** Watch the game. Socialize with those around you. However, do not allow this to inhibit your ability to play at a moment's notice. Always be ready to play your instrument, and follow along the game. Remember, we are there to support the football team, perform for the fans, and enhance the culture and climate of our school.
- **Whenever in uniform with the group, uniform changes are done as a whole group.** Often, once we're in the stands at a game, we will all take our jackets off. Do not do this until the entire band does as announced by the director. Failure to adhere to this expectation will result in a uniform violation and associated demerits.
- **When entering or exiting the stands, do so as efficiently, quickly, and as safely as possible.** Get to your assigned area, and stand at attention until you are released by the director/major. ONLY at that time will we make uniform alterations as a group. Use the stairs to get to your assigned row. People are watching our performances on and off of the field.
- **EVERYTHING THE AUDIENCE CAN SEE IS PART OF THE UNIFORM.** Including gloves, socks, shoes, and hats. Everyone MUST wear the same thing in regard to these smaller items. For more information, read the Uniform Etiquette section

## Performance Opportunities

The Sound of Suwannee Marching Band performs in a variety of venues throughout the school year. Most of which are fairly consistent and known already, but others will be more sporadic as the year progresses. Members/Parents will be notified as soon as possible of new performance events as they arise.

### Parades:

- 10/18 (Friday) Homecoming Parade
- 11/11 (Saturday) Veterans Day Parade
- 12/7 (Saturday) Christmas Parade
- 1/13 (Monday) MLK Day Parade
- Elementary School Parades throughout the School Days

### Competitions:

- 10/19 FMBC West Port High School
- 11/2 District Marching MPA @ Santa Fe High School

### Varsity Football Games:

- 8/16 - Bishop Kenny (Home)
- 8/23 - Columbia (Away)
- 8/30 - Lafayette (Home)
- 9/6 - Madison County (Home)
- 9/13 - Godby (Away)
- 9/20 - Appling County (Away)
- 9/27 - Wakulla (Away)
- 10/11 - Baker County (Home) **Homecoming**
- 10/18 - Taylor County (Home)
- 10/25 - Atlantic Coast (Away)
- 11/1 - Chiles (Away)
- 11/8, 11/15, 11/22, 11/29 Dates for Potential Playoff Games

All home games have kick-offs at 7:30pm. Call times will be reported and we will meet at **PAUL LANGFORD STADIUM DOWNTOWN.**

- Call Time: 5:45PM
- Bulldog Walk: 6:00PM
- Instrument Inspections: 6:15PM
- Uniform Inspections: 6:45PM
- Pregame Lineup: 7:10PM
- Kickoff: 7:30PM

All departure times for away games, competitions, etc. will be determined and distributed as soon as possible pending transportation information.

## Leadership Opportunities

Student leaders are incredibly important in producing a functioning band program. Our program features several interdependent roles that have different responsibilities to serve and build the program. See below their specific responsibilities. Student leaders are *not in charge*; they serve as a direct line of communication and accountability within the ensemble.

- *Drum Major*
  - Conduct the band through rehearsals, performances and lead through parades.
  - Assist the director in administrative decisions and organization.
  - Be an accurate model for rehearsal etiquette.
- *Captains; Band, Brass, Percussion, Woodwind, Dancing Dolls, Majorettes*
  - Band Captain - to effectively execute the directions of the Band Director and be a communicator of the status of band members.
  - Brass, Percussion, Woodwind, Dancing Dolls, Majorettes:
    - Effective leaders of their respective areas of the band.
    - Responsible for running sectionals in the absence of the director or a staff member.
    - Captains are a direct line of contact from the director to all members of the program.
    - Be an accurate model for rehearsal etiquette.
- *Librarian*
  - Manage the distribution and collection of all sheet music and folders throughout the year
  - Communicate with the band director, band captain, and drum major of any loose music in the room.
- *Uniform Manager*
  - Manage the distribution of uniforms.
  - To assist with uniform inspections
  - Communicate with the captains of unkempt and uniforms not properly stored.
- *Historian*
  - To work with the Band Director and Band Captains to commemorate and record events of the band.
- *Equipment Manager*
  - Manage the loading and unloading of the band trailers, stage areas, and band room.
  - Communicate with the captains of lockers and rooms that are left unorganized.



## Uniform Etiquette

As already discussed in this handbook, uniformity is key. This is no more evident than in proper care for the marching uniform. Read below guidelines for before, during, and after a performance.

*The 2024 Sub Uniform will consist of the following; 2024 SOS Band Shirt(green) or 2024 Show Shirt(pink), dark colored athletic shorts, tall black socks, marching shoes, black gloves (excluding percussion), and shako in hand. Auxiliary members, please refer to your individual section guidelines for sub-uniform information.*

- Before a Performance
  - Bibbers will be issued to each student (they are machine-washable), and students should arrive at the football games either wearing them or with them in hand. Jackets and Shakos will be transported via trailer.
  - **Hair, Makeup, and Jewelry are considered part of the uniform.** If hair is longer than collar length, it must be worn up to fit beneath the shako. Fingernail polish is only allowed if the color is neutral (even if you wear gloves), and makeup must be natural (excluding auxiliary). The only visible jewelry allowed is one stud earring per ear; necklaces must be worn underneath the shirt of the sub uniform (or not worn at all), and rings must not be worn (even under gloves).
  - Uniform and instrument inspections will take place before each performance.
- During a Performance:
  - Uniforms should be worn with pride, as you represent your band, your school, and your fellow band members. Some general guidelines to proper uniform wearing:
    - All aspects of the uniform will be worn *at all times* by all members until otherwise indicated.
    - When entering the stands after pregame or after halftime, stand at attention in your designated seat to be dismissed. At this point, be advised of uniform changes, as informed by the director or drum major.
- After a Performance:
  - Case your instrument **BEFORE** undressing so that proper instrument care is taken and loading can begin. It is critical that the uniform is properly hung onto your designated hanger after each performance.

## Fundraising and Volunteering Opportunities

Throughout the year, Sound of Suwannee will be participating in group fundraisers and volunteering opportunities. Through the efforts of these fundraisers, members of SOS can enjoy new and cleaned uniforms, school issued instruments, marching show props for the field, classroom accessories like tuners, metronomes, B.E.R.P.s, sheet music for marching and concert season, instrument lockers, concert folders, chairs and stands, sound equipment for performances, off campus concert field trips, paid for audition fees and music, transportation of students and equipment, and additional benefits of the sort. It is through the collective efforts of the group that this is able to happen. Even though a check for an equivalent amount is appreciated and would be accepted, it still does not minimize the collective responsibility for being a member of the group. As the old saying goes, “many hands make light work.”

## Trips and Travel

There will be many opportunities for the band to travel (outside of marching band, for information on the much more frequent trips with marching band refer to the marching band handbook), such as to district and state festivals and other third party performance opportunities. The rules are very simple; it all comes down to three things:

1. **ALL** school and band rules apply **AT ALL TIMES.**
2. Chaperones are an extension of the director: **THEY ARE IN CHARGE.**
3. You represent the band at all times; represent it with pride, integrity, and honor.

Failure to adhere to school and band rules while traveling will result in the offending student being sent home at the parent’s expense. Trip specific rules will be explained before embarking.

## Hazing Policy

At Suwannee High School, hazing of any form will not be accepted in any manner. Hazing is defined as, “any action or situation, with or without the consent of the participants, which recklessly, intentionally, or unintentionally endangers the mental, physical, or academic health or safety of a student.”

This includes, but is not limited to any situation which:

- Creates a risk of injury to any individual or group
- Causes discomfort to any individual or group
- Causes embarrassment to any individual or group
- Involves harassment of any individual or group
- Involves degradation of any individual or group
- Involves humiliation of an individual or group
- Involves ridicule of an individual or group

- Involves or includes the willful destruction or removal of public or private property for the purpose of initiation or admission into, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in an organization

Punishment for hazing is severe. At minimum, hazers will be removed from one game. At maximum, violators of the hazing policy will be dismissed from the band program, with possible further action from administration. If there are any doubts, questions, or clarifications, please don't hesitate to contact the band room.

### **Drug and Alcohol Policy**

Similarly, drug and alcohol use will not be tolerated at school, during rehearsals, on trips, or any time the student is associated with the band. Failure to adhere will result in removal from the band program and possible further action from administration.

### **Caveat**

Any scenario not discussed in this handbook falls to the discretion of the director; all director made decisions are final.

### **Conclusion**

While there may be many rules discussed in this handbook, it is my sincere hope that your time in band will be fulfilling, educational, fun, and memorable. If everyone follows the guidelines laid out in this handbook, we will have limited issues and interruptions. If there are any concerns or questions, I can ALWAYS be reached by email or Remind.

**Remember:** We do this for each other. What we personally gain out of band is but a reflection of what we gain together.

Thank you for your time and attention to these matters. I am excited to spend another year with you.

Clayton McPeak  
Suwannee High School Band Director  
[clayton.mcpeak@scsb.us](mailto:clayton.mcpeak@scsb.us)  
(386) 647 - 4095 Ext. 40183

## **2024-2025 Band Contract**

**I confirm that I have read and understand all of the points, outlines, guidelines, and rules enclosed in this booklet and will do my best to not only follow them myself, but encourage others to do as well.**

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**Student name (print)**

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**Signature**

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**Date**

**Parent/Guardian:**

**Both my child and I have read this band handbook, and acknowledge all policies within.**

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**Parent/Guardian name (print)**

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**Signature**

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**Date**