

Meyerland  
Performing & Visual Arts  
Middle School



Band Handbook  
{2025 – 2026}

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## **Foreword:**

The purpose of this handbook is to serve as a guide for students and parents involved in the Meyerland PVA Middle School Band Program. It is important that parents and students review the information it contains. Information, policies, and expectations are addressed throughout this handbook. If parents and students will take the time to read the following pages, the overall program will benefit greatly from a shared understanding between parents, teachers, and students. After reviewing these materials with your child, please sign the electronic form attached ~ thank you.

## **Introduction:**

Welcome to the Meyerland PVA Middle School Band Program! Band will be a new and meaningful experience for parents as well as students, and your involvement is essential and welcome. Band students develop self-discipline, social skills, confidence, leadership and dependability. Being in band will give each student a sense of accomplishment and pride, and students will develop musical skills that will enrich their lives. Every band student has been carefully screened and/or auditioned, and with practice and effort should achieve success on their instrument. The amount of practice and effort on the student's part will directly reflect their degree of success. Parental support and encouragement are also very important.

## **Class Rules:**

- Food and drinks stay out of the band hall ~ {Water bottles are OK in the classroom}
- Listen and follow directions throughout class time ~
- Raise your hand when needing to ask or answer questions throughout instruction ~
- Be respectful and prepared to learn every class period ~

## **Praise / Consequence Sequence**

- (1.) Positive Check Mark on Tracker / Verbal Warning No. 1
- (2.) Positive Check Mark (PCM) / Negative Check Mark No. 1
- (3.) (PCM) / Shifting Seat & Negative Check Mark No. 2
- (4.) Possible Leadership Role / Detention & Parent Contact
- (5.) Student Teacher Possibility / Growth Plan & Removal

**\*\*\*\*Please refer to the HISD Code of Student Conduct\*\*\*\***

\*Conduct Tracker(s) may be used as a tool that can measure positive and/or negative rates of participation of a specific student and/or instrumental section. Grades for the student under the classwork category weighted 35% will fall within this section. Please note, negatives are treated with personal positive redirection.

## **Statements of Responsibility:**

Students are expected to respect themselves and their property as well as the property of others. This includes the band hall, which is a shared space amongst all band students. Stealing or damaging equipment will absolutely not be tolerated. Students are expected to take instruments home daily for home practice.

Students are expected to ask for all missed work and make up all missed rehearsals in a timely manner (district policy is one week). Students are expected to participate in all required band activities. These are graded curricular extensions of the classroom that include: concerts, festivals, pep rallies, and special events. You will always be informed well in advance so that conflicts will be avoided ~ See your band calendar!

## **Attendance:**

The Texas Education Agency and the Houston Independent School District School Board have determined that band is a curricular program with extra- curricular components (concerts, extra rehearsals, section practices) that are graded curricular extensions of the classroom. Band is a performance based class. It is essential that all students be present at all performances. Concerts, performances, and some rehearsals are impossible to truly “make-up”. An unexcused absence from any performance, or duly scheduled rehearsal, will severely affect a student’s grade. Please know that band sectionals, rehearsals and performances are team efforts. Missing events does not only effect your individual child’s grade, it negativity impacts the integrity and effectiveness of any rehearsal or performance for all children involved as well as adding undue stress on your child’s peers in an effort to compensate for missing members. The following policy will be used for performance, sectionals and rehearsals:

1. An unexcused absence from a performance or required rehearsal will result in any student receiving a grade of zero for the event. The student may be removed from the performing organization after review with all parties and approval from campus administration.

2. The second unexcused absence clearly renders any person unreliable to the performing group and will result in removal from the performing organization.

Please, review your band calendar ASAP. Many scheduling conflicts can be resolved with reasonable notice. Any less than one week’s notice does not allow ample time to remedy scheduling conflicts for your child, as many of these efforts involve adjusting other students’ and families’ schedules as well. **IF YOUR STUDENT MUST BE ABSENT FROM ANY REQUIRED BAND FUNCTION, A PARENT MUST INFORM A BAND DIRECTOR BEFORE THE EVENT OCCURS FOR IT TO BE CONSIDERED EXCUSED.** Please, put all dates on your calendar at home, so that conflicts can be avoided.

## Teaching and Learning:

Teaching and learning are two sides of the same coin. Good teaching can facilitate learning but students must spend time doing activities that allow them to construct knowledge on their own to develop usable independent understandings of knowledge and skills. Band students will learn in three ways:

1. Imitations (rote teaching) / Breaking down music (note teaching)
2. Trial and Error (with teacher feedback until mastery)
3. Repetition &/or Discovery

During the trial and error period (practice), students must be allowed time to fix their own errors with teacher feedback that does not steal a student's opportunity to learn (i.e. giving them the answer). We are not interested in mediocre learning outcomes. We believe that all students can learn at the highest level and expect all students to demonstrate mastery of content presented and will allow time for them to do so. Every child learns at his/her own pace and we will grade assignments accordingly.

- No attempt: 0 = student has not attempted/refused the assignment
- Not yet: {various #} student has attempted assignment but still contains errors
- Pass: 85-100 = student has met requirements of assignment

Students will be given opportunities, within a grading period, to demonstrate mastery (not perfection) on any assignment. It should be expected that directors will give clear feedback as to how students can move forward. No grade should be seen as a permanent condition. All students should be constantly encouraged to work forward and only present their best effort.

## **Grading Breakdown:**

*Each band student's grade will be broken into the following categories:*

- \*45% - Formal/Informal Performances - { Concerts / Playing Assessments }
- \*35% - Classwork - { Written or Oral Assignments, Quizzes, Classroom Fluency }
- \*20% - Homework - { Music Recordings, Sight Reading Factory Assignments, Etc. }

## **Academic Eligibility:**

State law does not allow a student to participate in UIL events, competitions, or any extra-curricular activities unless all grades on the six weeks report card are 70 or above. Students remain ineligible for a period of three weeks, at which they may regain eligibility if all grades are above 70. Students who fail are allowed to perform in co-curricular events (concerts, performances) where no admission is charged. – {This area could be subject to change}

## **Home Practice:**

Regular home practice is the most crucial part of any band student's success. The amount of practice required will vary from student to student as some will need more than others to learn required assignments and to improve on their instrument. Quality is much more important than quantity. No instrument is to be left in the band room overnight.

- Parents! Your child will, at first, need to be reminded nightly to practice.

We need your help in developing these new habits. If your child is unsuccessful, the first thing to do is to ensure that your child is being reminded to practice nightly.

- Select a time that is free from distractions and a location that is free of interruptions.
- Set goals (your band director and private teacher will help with this) for each practice session and make sure they get done; discipline yourself!
- Avoid wasting time just “playing through” music you have already mastered; instead concentrate on difficult parts - challenges are how we get better.

- Slow, steady, regular practice will always pay off more than fast, sloppy, last second attempts at preparation (that will create more mistakes).
- Always remember to warm-up before you play your instrument, set a goal, and get it done!
- Remember to ask for help before the assignment is due if needed
- Lastly, please know that no grade is ever a permanent condition; always strive for mastery not mediocrity.

## **Instrument Storage & Identification:**

It is each student's responsibility to make sure their instrument is clearly fastened with their name and contact information. Percussionists are to have their name on all mallets and sticks. All students will be provided with secure storage for their instruments at school. No instrument is to be left at school overnight. All instruments should be taken home for nightly home practice.

## **Uniform:**

### **All Bands:**

*\*All black contest uniform* – black dress shirt, black slacks, black belt, black socks and black dress shoes.

## **Contests:**

### **TMEA All-Region:**

The Texas Music Educators Association sponsors individual competitions each fall for students to be ranked among their peers in our TMEA Region (23). Students perform for a panel of 5 judges in a blind audition where judges are screened from sight and do not know which students are performing. Each judge ranks each student, and similar to golf, the student with the lowest score is 1st chair and several other students ranked 2nd, 3rd etc. are accepted to the All-Region band. These students get to work with a nationally known conductor and play in the TMEA All-Region Band. Making the All-Region Band is the highest honor a middle school player can receive! Private lessons and sectionals are a great asset to students making the All-Region Band.

### **HISD All-City Band:**

This competition runs similar to that of the All-Region Band auditions although this contest only includes students from the Houston Independent School District and is held usually in late October. All-City Band is like a sort of pre-test before students compete within the larger Region. Students selected to the All-City Band have the privilege of working with a renowned conductor and performing with the All-City Band.

### **UIL Solo and Ensemble Contest:**

The only "individual" competition that the UIL sponsors for instrumentalists is held in the spring semester. Students choose a solo and/or an ensemble for their instrument and begin work ASAP. Judges rate each performance compared to a statewide scale of excellence, not as a comparison of one student to another. Students have the opportunity to earn the coveted "First Division" gold medal!

### **UIL Concert and Sight-reading Contest:**

This is the most staple competition for bands in Texas and is the evaluative event that gives band its curricular standing in the State of Texas; much like the STAAR test for the other curricular classes (math, science, etc.); occurring every year in the spring in all 33 regions of the state. Bands prepare a concert program of three pieces chosen from the Prescribed Music List and perform for a panel of three judges who rate the bands with one of five ratings, with a rating of "one" being the highest. Theoretically, every band could earn a First Division or a Fifth Division! Immediately following the concert, bands move to another room to sight-read a piece of music (play music they have never seen) chosen to be read by all the bands within a class statewide. The music for sight-reading is composed specifically for the contest and addresses certain fundamentals that are aligned with the curriculum for each classification. This is the musical equivalent of a statewide achievement test for band, similar to STAAR.

## **Seating Ranks / Auditions:**

Depending on a specific class, band students will experience getting ranked within their different ensembles. Initial placement will come from your director. In the spring semester, all band students will have a summative assessment review for band placement the following year. Results for next year can be reviewed with director(s) prior to the completion of the school year. Although we are ranking students based off musical preparation/delivery, it is *VERY* important that our end goal is working as team and thus will let us create great music one unit/ensemble. All eighth grade students continuing in band may be required to audition for a high school band program. Music for this audition will be made available to students several weeks before the audition takes place. Neighboring high school directors will come to visit throughout the year to provide more information and guidance.

## **Handing Money + Donations:**

Money for events or social events should be communicated between band director(s), student and band parent(s). Donations can be paid to our band booster through a unique form or through other arranged/documented methods between director and band parent. Our band booster donation is explained through another form provided by the band director(s). This amount will surplus the basic function of instrumental equipment and band related functions. When handing money, please put money and the respective form(s) in a sealed mailing envelope or something of the like, with your child's name. Again, a band booster form can be found within another document communicated from the band director(s).

## **Special Trips and Off Campus Travel:**

Traveling with the band for trips and events is a privilege. For the safety of all children, students who display discipline issues will not be afforded the opportunity to travel off campus with the band. Bus forms and parent permission slips will be handed to students beforehand to ensure files are updated for the specific trip.

# **Magnet Program Expectations:**

## **Grades:**

- Maintain an individual class average of 75 or higher in all core classes and an average of 80 or higher in all magnet classes

## **Attendance:**

- Maintain regular attendance
- Refrain from excessive tardiness
- Respect school rules concerning the timely drop-off and pick-up of students

## **Behavior:**

- Adhere to the HISD Student Code of Conduct and maintain a conduct grade of 'S' or higher

# **Meyerland Bands:**

In the beginning year, the emphasis in band is on learning the fundamentals of music and the basic skills required to play an instrument correctly. Mastery of these skills leads to further development of a more advanced skill set which will allow students to progress smoothly into a stage band or performing ensemble.

In the stage bands, students continue into performing band classes that provide a more challenging and enriching learning environment for the advancing performer. These classes meet in a fuller context and once a week in small group rehearsals called sectionals. These stage bands perform regular concerts throughout the school year.

# **Media Release:**

Students may use various software programs to measure musical growth through visual and audio means. Submitting assignments will occur through private and public means as well. Public recording content will be able to be viewed online similarly to attending a live concert setting. Private recording means assignment submissions will only be viewed by the band director(s). Content used in class may also be used professionally and ethically to support the band program on our YouTube channel called 'Meyerland PVA Band'. Supporting documentation may be requested to reinforce permission of such sharing.

## **Band Booster:**

The band booster organization is a club that extends the empowerment to the band parents. Band parents work together with band directors to further the opportunities for the student body participating in Meyerland PVA Band. This organization has a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and band liaison. If interested in joining this organization to further the development and out-reach of the MPVA Band Department, please e-mail a band director(s) to obtain more information.

## **General Policy Statement:**

Students enter our Magnet program through the audition process in their primary/1st areas of interest. Students will remain in that discipline for their three years at Meyerland PVAMS and will not be permitted to leave their primary/1st area of interest. Should a student with mitigating circumstances wish to change their primary/1st area of acceptance, he/she must get permission from that teacher and be in good standing, AND reapply and audition for placement in the following year. If they are not accepted in the area they are auditioning for as a replacement, they will be exited out of our magnet program and thus return to their zoned school. Students are also expected to remain in their second magnet class throughout their time in our program unless there is sufficient reason (schedule conflict or after conference with teachers, change deemed necessary) presented to necessitate a change. As Magnet Transfer students, you must maintain a minimum grade of 80 in Magnet classes, and 75 in Core academic subject areas, as well as no less than an S in conduct. If a student fails to meet this requirement, he or she will be placed on a Magnet Growth Plan to improve their grades or behavior, and an accumulation of three Growth Plans will directly affect a student's magnet status and enrollment at Meyerland PVAMS.

## **Cell Phone Policy:**

Per House Bill 1481 and TEA, MPVA Band Students should be strictly prohibited from the visible and audible presence of cellphones, tablets, smart watches, and non-school issued listening devices (headphones, air pods, ear buds, etc....).

HISD students who violate HB14 will receive the following consequences:

Offense 1 – Cell phone confiscated and returned to a parent after school

Offense 2 – Cell phone confiscated and held to the next day

Offense 3 – Cell phone confiscated and held for two school days

Further offenses will result in elevated formal disciplinary action, as outlined in the HISD Student Code of Conduct.

HISD will not be held responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged devices confiscated due to the violation of the law and district policy.

There are also consequences for HISD teachers and administrators who do not enforce HB 1481.

Those who fail to enforce HB 1481 will receive the following:

Non-Compliance 1 – Verbal Warning

Non-Compliance 2 – Letter of Reprimand

Non-Compliance 3 – Letter of Reprimand

Non-Compliance 3 – Consequences up to termination

In response to the law and HISD policy, Mr. Orloske and/or Ms. Jordan will be confiscating and submitting any of the aforementioned electronic devices upon discovery.

**HISD values a safe and distraction-free learning environment.**  
In accordance with House Bill 1481, all Texas public schools will implement a strict **“No Personal Communication Device”** rule during the instructional day.

### WHAT’S CHANGING

The following devices are **prohibited from use** on school property during the instructional day.



**Cell  
Phones**



**Smart  
Watches**



**Tablets**



**Headphones  
and Earbuds**

Devices **must** be:

- ✓ Kept at home or stored away
- ✓ Turned off in backpacks or lockers

**Only District-provided devices are approved for use during class time.**

#### **Exceptions only for:**

- Approved medical needs
- A documented need based on a directive from a qualified physician
- Special Education needs (as outlined in the student’s IEP or 504 plan)

### DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

#### **1st Offense**

Device is confiscated, parents/guardians may retrieve the phone from the office **after school and review the law and HISD cell phone policy.**

#### **2nd Offense**

Device is confiscated, parents/guardians may pick up the phone in the office **after one full school day.**

#### **3rd Offense**

Device is confiscated, parents/guardians may pick up the phone in the office **after two full school days.**

Further offenses will result in elevated formal disciplinary action, as outlined in the HISD Student Code of Conduct.

HISD will not be held responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged devices confiscated due to the violation of the law and district policy.

## **Teacher to Parent Communication:**

Communication between the Directors and parents is imperative. Mr. Orloske and/or Ms. Jordan will be using ParentSquare, HISD email, and YouTube to communicate important information to both students and parents. Please be sure check the contact that information that you have provided in both PowerSchool and ParentSquare for inaccuracies. We are not responsible for communications not received due to inaccurate information nor the lack of accurate information.

## **School Instrument Rentals:**

HISD instruments are prioritized for non-experienced students. All band parents should refer to the Band Booster Donation Instrument Rental Form to support the use of a school owned instrument throughout the current school year. Repairs for the H.I.S.D instruments are the responsibility of the parent. Lost or damaged instruments must be replaced by the parent. A police report should be filed and presented to the directors in the case of a stolen instrument. Experienced students are highly encouraged to procure an instrument through either the recommended rental programs or purchased from the recommended retail stores. Finally, any district form need to be completed in order for student to take home a specific instrument.

## **Contract Signature**

\*After understanding the contents of this handbook, the student, parent(s) and band director(s) will professionally adhere to the direction of student growth and musical development within this band program. Consistent academic and conduct failure within this program can result in a student growth plan, parent conference and/or removal from the band program. Before any such action is taken place, objective data will support all student intervention.

***With the support of the MPVA administration, each student, parent and band director, will agree to the following handbook by completing and/or archiving file data for every student. A contract file form will be communicated separately from the band director(s). By filing out this contract form, is it understood the content within this document is to successfully obtain student, program and musical growth during the school year here at Meyerland Performing and Visual Art Middle School.***



### **Subject to Change**

\*Please note, all content is possible as subject to change. Any changes will be communicated to the students, parents and/or any other supporting participants of the band program.