Baines Longhorn Band Student Handbook

2024-2025

Introduction and Philosophy

Welcome to the Baines Middle School band program! Learning to play an instrument can be a rewarding and enriching experience. The purpose of this handbook is to provide a written policy on the organization and operation of our band program. It contains information of great importance for both students and parents. Please take the time to read each page carefully as a family. This will be accessible in the Parent Communication folder in your Schoology Course for reference throughout the year. Band is a group activity that depends upon the collaborative work of many individuals. The actions of one person will have an effect, either positive or negative, on the entire group. For this reason, we have guidelines that everyone must follow so that each person may grow as an individual musician and make a positive contribution to the ensemble. There is a page at the end of this handbook that will need to be signed and returned to school.

The study and performance of music is an opportunity that our young people of today truly need. It is not our main goal as teachers to make professional musicians of our students, but to enable them to fully enjoy the life-long benefits of making music. Our classroom will afford the opportunity for students to exercise the strong characteristics of Fort Bend ISD's profile of a graduate. We believe through rich musical experiences, students will grow in their abilities to be equipped with skills for life, a servant leader, an effective communicator, a critical thinker, a compassionate citizen, a collaborative team member, and a lifelong learner.

We affirm the power of playing an instrument to be a heart-opening experience for both performers and audience. We believe that the connections made among members of this band can be long-term friendships and sources of support. We maintain that outstanding musical experiences during student years provide the basis for a life-long appreciation of music. We achieve together what cannot be done alone. None of these can be achieved without hard work, perseverance, and passion.

Classroom Procedure

For all band students to receive the best possible musical experience during their time in the Baines band program, students must uphold a high standard of behavior, discipline, and professionalism. It is up to each student to take ownership over their actions and understand the implications of their choices as it affects themselves and others. These band hall standards are displayed in both the band hall and ensemble room and encompass the attitude expected of all Baines band students:

1. I will not speak when the band director is speaking.
2. I will always treat my band directors and my peers with respect.
3. I will never take any action to negatively affect the productivity of the band.
4. I will always have the proper attitude and materials required for an efficient rehearsal.
5. I will always commit to keeping the band hall cleaner and more organized than the way I found it.

Further, students will enter the room quietly and will proceed to their assigned lockers, retrieve their materials and instruments, and take their seats in the ensemble set-up. Students will not be allowed to play their instruments prior to the ensemble director indicating that it is appropriate to do so. Students must be in their assigned seats as soon as possible and within three minutes of the tardy bell ringing. Failure to may result in the deduction of points from that student's daily grade. Consistent tardiness will result in disciplinary actions consistent with Baines Middle School procedures.

Following rehearsal, students will quickly return their instrument and materials to their lockers and will assist the directors in assuring the room is ready for the next class.

Food and drink (aside from water) are not allowed in the band hall except for special occasions which will be announced by the band directors.

Students will not leave the room without permission and a pass having been written by the director. This is at the director's discretion.

Student cell phones ***ARE NOT ALLOWED*** to be out and visible during rehearsals and may not be used. Students will have three options to consider when managing their devices: they may leave them in their backpacks, in their lockers, or in storage provided by the directors. Students and parents are to refer to the Baines Middle School Handbook for further information related to cell phones and their use during school hours. The Baines Band staff are not responsible for student devices when those devices are placed in storage, in the student's backpack, or in their assigned lockers.

Student Expectations

Expectations regarding preparation and participation will be different depending on which ensemble you are placed in:

Honors Band students are expected to be prepared and participate in the All Region Band audition process, demonstrate mastery of all 12 major scales and full range chromatic scale throughout the course of the year, be prepared and participate in both a solo and ensemble at the Solo/Ensemble contest, be prepared and participate at all contests, concerts, and performances, attend ALL before or after school sectional and full band rehearsals, and uphold a high standard of behavior, discipline and professionalism in and out of the classroom. Honors Band students will participate in more public performances and may be required to attend additional rehearsals as a result. Those rehearsals will be communicated as far in advance as possible.

Symphonic Band students are expected to demonstrate mastery of 7 major scales and chromatic scale throughout the course of the year, be prepared and participate in an at least a solo at the Solo/Ensemble contest, be prepared and participate at all contests, concerts, and performances, attend ALL before or after school sectional and full band rehearsals, and uphold a high standard of behavior, discipline and professionalism in and out of the classroom. Symphonic band students are also invited to participate in the All-Region Band audition process.

Concert Band students are expected to demonstrate proficiency of 7 major scales and one octave chromatic scale, be prepared and participate in an at least a solo at the Solo/Ensemble contest, be prepared and participate at all concerts and performances, and uphold a high standard of behavior, discipline, and professionalism in and out of the classroom.

Beginning Band students are expected to demonstrate proficiency of 7 major scales and one octave chromatic scale by the end of the beginning year, demonstrate music theory comprehension through written quizzes and exams, be prepared and participate at all concerts and performances (Beginning Band Solo Contest and the band festival competition towards the end of the Spring Semester), and uphold a high standard of behavior, discipline and professionalism in and out of the classroom.

Rehearsal and Individual Listening Attendance Policy (Honors and Symphonic Band Only)

For our band program to reach its fullest potential, we must set the expectation of sectional rehearsal attendance. Regular attendance at a sectional rehearsal is the heart of every successful band program. Sectional rehearsals provide the students the individual and small group specialized instruction they cannot receive during full band rehearsal. The goal of a sectional rehearsal is to strengthen individual fundamentals and increase the skill and performance abilities of the section in a small group setting. Sectional rehearsals are a co-curricular extension of the instruction in our performing band classes and are required by FBISD. They are a continuation of the pedagogical aspects of instrumental learning that started at the beginning band level. Attendance is required at ALL sectional rehearsals year-round. There are of course different circumstances that may cause your child to miss a rehearsal, so the following policy will be implemented:

- Please communicate any conflicts early so we can handle them appropriately.
- Examples of excused absences are illness, family emergency, and other specific cases approved between parent and the directors. All other absences are considered unexcused.
- For any absence to be considered excused, a parent or guardian must contact the directors with the reason for the absence before the rehearsal takes place.
- Students must make-up the missed sectional by attending another sectional. The student must communicate his or her intent to make-up the sectional as soon as possible following the absence.
- Sectional attendance forms part of the student's weekly grade.

Two weeks prior to All Region Auditions, Honors Band students (and Symphonic Band members choosing to participate) will be required to attend weekly individual listening's. Listening's will be one on one with a band director to provide immediate, personalized feedback.

Band Hall Doors Procedure and Policy

The double doors from the bus ramp that lead directly into the band hall will always be locked. Mr. Simmons and Mrs. Clift plan to arrive at school prior to the 7:30 am sectional rehearsal start time. If you are a student that arrives at school prior to 7:30 am, please plan on congregating near the glass doors commons entrance until you are let into the building by either Mr. Simmons or Mrs. Clift.

Grading Procedures

Students in the Baines band program will be graded as follows (in accordance with FBISD District Policy EIA-R and the Performing Arts Handbook 2024-2025)

Daily Grades (50%)

Including but not limited to the quality of a student's daily participation and preparation, practice records, video recording submissions, projects, and attendance at before or after school sectional/full band rehearsals. Rehearsals are extensions of classroom activities. These will be counted as a double daily grade. An unexcused tardy or absence from such rehearsals may result in points being deducted from the grade. In the gradebook, the quality of participation and preparation, among other important aspects of a student's participation in rehearsal, will be included in the students Ensemble Rehearsal Skills grade which is given daily and averaged at the end of each week. Having the assigned music, binder, pencils, tuners, reeds, lubricants, and other required materials found in this handbook will fall under the Materials grade which is given daily and averaged at the end of each week. A student will receive nine Ensemble Rehearsal Skills grades and nine Materials grades among other potential daily grades each quarter.

Major Grades (50%)

Including but not limited to performance tests, video recording submissions, attendance and participation at curricular performances. These will be counted as a double major grade. An unexcused tardy or absence from such performances will result in points being deducted from the grade.

Home Practice

Why should I practice? Success and mastery in the playing of a musical instrument is determined by the amount and quality of regular practice. Daily practice at home will ensure satisfactory progress. Home practice is expected and required. The physical demands and muscle memory of producing a QUALITY sound, playing with clean technical accuracy, and the reading of music notation will be strengthened over time ONLY through CONSISTENT, DAILY PRACTICE.

How much do I practice? The recommended amount of daily practice time is at least 30 minutes per day. The quality of the practice must be prioritized over the quantity of practice time. We also strongly encourage equally distributed practice time in order to promote consistency in practice habits.

Do I have to bring my instrument home every day? YES. No instrument is to spend the night in the band hall. Upon the first offense of this expectation, you will receive a warning. Each subsequent offense will result in 10 points deducted off your weekly participation grade.

School Owned Equipment

To maintain FBISD's inventory of musical instruments in proper playing condition for current and future use, the Department of Fine Arts requires that each student using a district-owned instrument pay a $80 Instrument Use Fee for upkeep and repair. Instruments that fall under this category include, but are not limited to oboe, bassoon, bass clarinet, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, French horn, euphonium, tuba, and percussion.

Uniform

The formal uniform for the Honors, Symphonic, and Concert band is as follows:

Boys: Black button down, long sleeve shirt, black pants (not jeans), black socks and black dress shoes.

Girls: Dress option: The dress must be all black. The dress must go well past the knees (think maxi or floor length) and have sleeves that cover the shoulder (they may also be long sleeve). Students must also wear black tights and closed toe, solid black dress shoes. Or, girls may wear the formal uniform worn by the boys.

Sixth grade band students will wear the band t-shirt and jeans for performances unless otherwise indicated by the band staff. Concerts in the winter and spring will require a "Sunday best" attire.

All students in the program will need to purchase a Band T-Shirt. This fee will be included in the overall Band Membership fee this year. This shirt will be used as the uniform for events such as, but not limited to football games, pep rallies, spirit days, All-Region Band auditions, All-Region Band clinics, picture days, concerts, and social events.

Required Materials

All students in the Baines Band are required to have the following materials:

- BLACK 1in. 3 Ring Band Binder
- 5 Dividers – Tabs listed below:
    - 1. Objective Sheet
    - 2. Daily Drill
    - 3. Scales/Technique
    - 4. Rhythm/SR
    - 5. Music
- Pencil Pouch
- 2-3 sharpened pencils
- Korg TM-60 Tuner and Metronome Standard w/ Korg CM-300 Contact Microphone
- All necessary oils, greases, etc. for Instrument Specific Maintenance and Upkeep

Band Fees

Each student enrolled in band is required to pay a general band fee that covers various costs throughout the year. We work to keep band fees as low as possible for all students. We will not charge students unnecessary fees. Fees (aside from the district's instrument rental fee) will be paid through the district's Revtrak portal. Fees may include:

- **Band T-Shirt- $15.00**
- **School-Owned Instrument Fee** - $100 (Only for students on FBISD-Owned Instruments)
- **Spring Festival** - TBD
- **Social Events & Spring Trips** – TBD

Some of these fees will be assessed at the beginning of the year. Other fees will be assessed on an "as needed" basis (such as social events or the Spring Trip).

Longhorn Band Handbook Commitment and Agreement 2025-2026

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Student First & Last Name (print) **Grade** **Band** **Instrument**

Student Commitment Statement:

I have read and understand the expectations for membership in the Baines Longhorn Band at Baines Middle School for the 2025-2026 school year. I commit to meeting the expectations and obligations as a member of the Baines Longhorn Band. By signing this commitment statement, I agree to make a positive contribution to the band program and better myself each day. I agree to work to be organized and timely to attend all rehearsals and performances that go along with membership in the band. I understand that I am ultimately in charge of my choices and decisions to make my experience in band the best that it can be.

_____ _____

Student Signature **Date**

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian Signature **Date**

***** The BMS Band Handbook and the FBISD Middle School Fine Arts Handbook can both be found in Schoology in the "Parent Resources" and "Important Band Documents" Folders.***