

TUPELO HIGH SCHOOL BAND HANDBOOK

2026-2027

**Tupelo Bands
4125 Golden Wave Drive
Tupelo, MS 38801**

662.841.8970

www.tupelobands.com

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Tupelo High School Band is to provide students with a meaningful music education while representing our school with pride and excellence. We strive for the highest level of performance in everything we do while building responsibility, citizenship, and strong teamwork. We believe we are stronger together than we are individually.

INTRODUCTION

This handbook serves as a reference for students and parents regarding all aspects of the Tupelo High School Band program. While we aim to cover all important information, the band staff reserves the right to make changes or additions as needed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We appreciate the continued support of the Tupelo Public School District.

The Tupelo Public School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or any other legally protected classification. Questions regarding non-discrimination should be directed to the Director of Human Resources, Scott Williams (sewilliams@tupeloschools.com).

BAND DIRECTORS

Dustin Thrasher – dthrasher@tupeloschools.com
Christopher Knox – clknox@tupeloschools.com
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PERFORMING ENSEMBLES

The Tupelo High School Band includes marching band, concert bands, jazz band, pep bands, indoor percussion, indoor winds, and fall and indoor color guard.

Placement and participation are determined by audition and director approval.

Band is a co-curricular program, meaning rehearsals, performances, and travel are required parts of participation. Enrollment in band class does not guarantee placement in a performing ensemble.

Students who do not meet expectations for attendance, effort, behavior, or responsibility may remain in class but lose eligibility for performances or travel. Severe infractions may result in dismissal from the ensemble or band program altogether.

REHEARSALS & COMMITMENT

Rehearsals are the foundation of the program.

The year begins with summer band camp rehearsals. During marching season, rehearsals occur multiple days per week in addition to class and after-school rehearsals.

Attendance, punctuality, and preparation are non-negotiable. Students are expected to plan and communicate conflicts early.

Missing the rehearsal immediately before a performance may result in the student not performing unless properly excused and documented in advance.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is critical to group success.

- 5 tardies = removal from competitive ensemble
- 2 unexcused absences = removal from the competitive ensemble
- Documentation for excused absences must be submitted within 2 school days of return
- Work, vacations, and optional appointments are not excused

For all band members, **all absences must be approved before rehearsal—no exceptions.** Last-minute or vague communication will not be accepted.

EXCUSED/UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Examples of Excused Absences

- Sickness
- Injury
- Family Death/Funeral
- School activity conflicts that are communicated IN ADVANCE (at the band director's discretion)
- Emergencies that cannot be avoided

Examples of Unexcused Absences

- Work
 - Lack of Ride
 - Unnecessary Appointments (Hair, Nails, etc.)
 - Parental Punishment
 - Situations that are avoidable by proper planning
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MARCHING SEASON

Marching season runs from mid-July through the end of the fall semester.

Students are expected to:

- Maintain consistent attendance and punctuality
- Be coachable and responsive to instruction
- Meet all rehearsal, music, and visual deadlines
- Arrive prepared with proper equipment and attire

This is a highly structured, competitive ensemble that requires full commitment.

Failure to meet expectations may result in additional conditioning activities, loss of performance opportunities, or removal from the ensemble. Excessive attendance issues may result in removal with no refund of fees.

CONCERT SEASON

The concert band program at Tupelo High School consists of three audition-based ensembles: THS Concert Band, THS Symphonic Band, and THS Wind Ensemble. These groups are performance-based ensembles that meet throughout the school year and participate in concerts as well as adjudicated music festivals.

Placement in each ensemble is determined through a formal audition process that includes major scales, a prepared solo, and sight-reading. Audition results are used to determine chair placement and ensemble assignment for each student.

Students are expected to maintain consistent attendance and punctuality, remain coachable and responsive to instruction, and meet all rehearsal and performance expectations, including music preparation and assigned deadlines. Students must arrive prepared for each rehearsal with the proper equipment and materials.

The THS Wind Ensemble serves as the premier performing ensemble and is responsible for representing the THS Band program in state adjudication events, including Concert Performance and Sight-Reading evaluations, to achieve the highest possible ratings.

PERFORMANCES

Performances are the highest priority of the program.

- One unexcused performance absence may result in removal from the program
- Tardiness may result in loss of privileges or performance eligibility
- Students must be fully prepared and on time

Each performance is a group responsibility, and one absence affects the entire ensemble.

BEHAVIOR & EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to:

- Respect directors, staff, and student leaders
- Respond to instruction and correction immediately
- Maintain focus and positive effort

Argumentative, disrespectful, or uncoachable behavior will not be tolerated and may result in removal from performing ensembles.

HEALTH & PARTICIPATION

Students are expected to manage their health responsibly.

- Students with fever or contagious illness should remain home and notify a director in advance
 - Participants are expected to attend rehearsal despite minor illnesses whenever possible.
 - Students may be asked to observe if unable to fully participate
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EQUIPMENT & RESPONSIBILITY

Students are responsible for all instruments, uniforms, and equipment issued to them.

- Items must be maintained, labeled, and brought to all rehearsals and performances
- Missing or improper equipment is treated as a rehearsal infraction
- Students must complete assigned responsibilities (setup, cleanup, loading, etc.)

Failure to complete responsibilities affects the entire group and will result in consequences.

UNIFORMS & VISUAL EXPECTATIONS

Uniforms, costumes, hair, and visual design are determined by directors based on production needs.

- All appearance guidelines must be followed without exception
- Hair color must remain consistent throughout the season
- No mid-season changes without approval
- Wigs or extensions may be used if performance-ready and approved

Earring, watch, and necklace guidelines are set by directors, but will not be allowed during marching band performances.

Please note that these policies may be altered for color guard members. This is for safety and uniformity purposes.

Gauges are not permitted at any time.

Students are responsible for any injury or limitation caused by jewelry worn during rehearsal.

If a student cannot commit to these expectations, this activity may not be the right fit.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY & FUNDRAISING

Students are responsible for all fees for the ensemble in which they are participating and must meet payment deadlines.

- **General Band Fee: \$350** **Payments Aug. 15 and Sept. 15**
- **Fall Color Guard Fee: \$600** **Payments: July 15, Aug. 15, Sept. 15, Oct. 15**

Fundraising opportunities will be provided and strongly encouraged. Students may also be required to assist with program fundraising efforts, such as advertising sales and sponsorships.

Failure to meet financial obligations without proper communication may affect participation in performances or access to required materials.

GRADING SYSTEM

Grades are based on three areas:

- **Music/Routine Pass-Off:** Individual performance and progress
- **Citizenship:** Responsibility, effort, and dependability
- **Rehearsal/Performance:** Preparation, focus, and participation

INDOOR SEASON

Indoor ensembles (winter guard, percussion, winds) are open to students in good standing who successfully audition. Participation in the full band program is required for eligibility.

The indoor program is a performance-based part of the band program and is expected to follow all policies outlined in this handbook. Students who participate in any of these indoor programs, including Riptide, Tsunami, Vortex, and Typhoon, are expected to fully commit to the demands of each ensemble. Rehearsals occur multiple days per week during the competitive seasons, and students are expected to prioritize all rehearsals and performances.

All absences must be approved before rehearsal, and attendance and punctuality directly impact performance opportunities and placement in all ensembles. Students are expected to always remain coachable and consistently meet all visual and performance standards across both marching and indoor programs. Failure to

meet these expectations may result in conditioning assignments, loss of performance roles, or removal from the ensemble.

All indoor fees, performance schedules, and additional policies specific to each ensemble are determined at the discretion of the ensemble director and communicated to students and families as needed.

Color guard students who also play an instrument are required to continue participation on their instrument in order to remain eligible for color guard. Additionally, students who do not participate in band on an instrument must remain active in all eligible fall and winter guard semesters to maintain their eligibility in the program.

Participation in indoor percussion, indoor winds, winter guard, and/or jazz band requires enrollment in the Tupelo High School marching band and/or concert band for every eligible semester. Only extenuating circumstances, such as enrollment in Middle College, are the exceptions to this policy.

DRUM MAJOR

Drum Major is open to students in grades 10–12. Selection is based on audition and director approval, with leadership and conduct heavily considered.

COMMUNICATION

All official communication will be delivered through the Band App, email, or director communication.

Students and at least one parent are required to remain connected to all communication platforms.

SENIORS

Seniors are expected to participate in all eligible semesters to remain in good standing. Failure to do so may affect eligibility for awards, recognition, and senior honors. Middle College is the ONLY exception to this policy. Proper communication from a counselor must be provided to the Director of Bands.

PARENTAL SUPPORT

Parental support and involvement are essential to the success of the Tupelo High School Band program.

- Parents assist by passing out water during band camp and helping keep students safe and hydrated.
- They serve as chaperones for travel, rehearsals, and performances.
- Parents help at festivals and events, supporting logistics and organization.
- They work in concession stands to help raise funds for the program.
- Assistance with uniforms helps ensure students are properly prepared for performances.
- Parents also help serve meals during long rehearsal days and events.
- Fundraising efforts supported by parents directly benefit students and the overall program.
- They travel and cheer for the students at competitions.

Parents are encouraged to participate and be active and committed members of our organization.

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

Today, social media can be a positive or a negative occurrence. Band members should not post anything in any format about the band or any band members, band staff, or adjunct staff members, which can even remotely be construed as negative!

(Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, TikTok, group texts, etc.) This will not be tolerated! Any violation of this policy will result in the student's removal from the band program. NO online account will be formed with a name or membership that indicates an association with the Tupelo High School Band without the express consent of a band director.

Parent and Student Agreement 2026–2027 School Year

We, the undersigned, acknowledge that we have read, understand, and agree to comply with all guidelines, expectations, and policies outlined in the Tupelo High School Band Student Handbook. We recognize that adherence to these standards is essential to the success and integrity of the band program.

We further understand that failure to comply with these policies may result in disciplinary action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, physical conditioning (e.g., push-ups or laps), loss of privileges during the third quarter, removal from participation in the competitive marching production, and/or dismissal from the band program.

We acknowledge that all disciplinary decisions are made at the discretion of the Director of Bands. Additionally, we understand that policies and procedures outlined in the handbook may be revised at the Director's discretion as necessary.

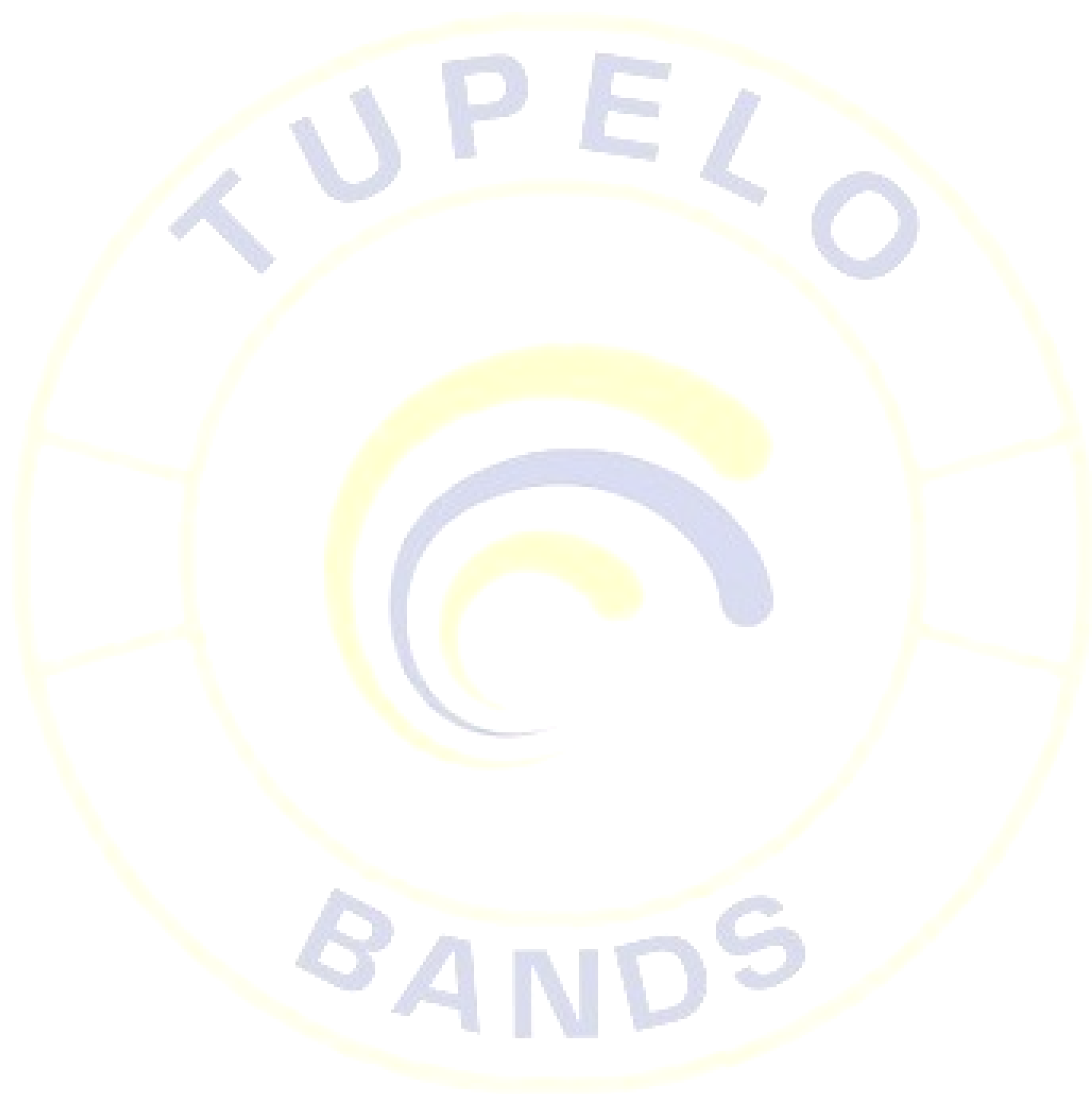
Before signing this agreement, we have reviewed the attached band calendar and understand the time commitment required, including all rehearsals, performances, and related obligations associated with membership in the Tupelo High School Band.

PRINT STUDENT NAME: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed): _____

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____



**Tupelo Guard Medical Form
2026-2027**

***Please PRINT information

Student Name _____ **DOB** _____

Parent/Legal Guardian _____

Phone # _____ **Phone #** _____

Medical Insurance Name _____

Policy # _____ **Group #** _____

List any medications & dosage that your child is currently taking:

List any medical conditions or allergies that your child has:

Does your child require or use an inhaler? _____yes _____no I acknowledge that my child MUST keep their inhaler on their person during rehearsals and performances.	Director may administer OTC drugs: ie: tylenol, benadryl, pamprin, pepto _____ YES _____ NO
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Parent/Guardian Signature *signifies that all information on this form is accurate and indicates that you give permission for your child to receive urgent care in the event of an emergency.*

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ **Date** _____