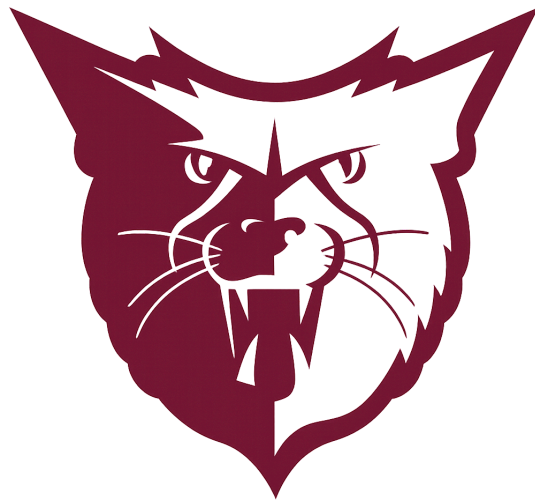


Sherman Middle School Band Handbook 2026-2027



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Welcome to the Bearcat Band!

Sherman Middle School Band members learn the importance of dependability, teamwork, communication, grit, and music daily. We emphasize growth - both of our program and ourselves. Each of our members is valued as a unique individual as well as a part of the greater whole, contributing to our team's goals and culture.

As a member of our band program, you can expect:

- To develop musical experiences that enhance the student's overall educational experiences
- To provide a suitable background in music instruction for those students who elect to continue the study of music into high school
- To develop a lifelong appreciation for music and the continuation of musical activities
- To develop a performing organization that is a source of pride for the students, the school, and the community

We are so glad that your child has chosen to take on the enriching experience of being in band! We are proud to be working with your child to build a tradition of excellence here in the Sherman Middle School Bearcat Band. Feel free to reach out to us to show your support or ask questions regarding the guidelines in this handout.

Sincerely,

Mr. Burris and Mrs. Dickson

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to serve as a guide and source of information for students and parents regarding the SMS Bearcat Band program. Information, policies, and clear expectations are the basis for good human relations and allow the teacher, parent, and student to work together toward the goals of musical and personal excellence. Please read through this entire handbook and take note of how these policies will affect your child.

The rules and policies outlined in the following pages are simple and sound. By abiding by them, you are fulfilling an obligation to your school, your fellow band members, and yourself. Only when every band member puts forth their full and best effort can a band achieve its goals.

Congratulations on being a member of the SMS Bearcat band! Let's work together to make this a great year!

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

It is our goal as music educators to help our students develop an appreciation for and love of music. The study and performance of music is an opportunity that our young people need to experience. It is not our goal as teachers to make professional musicians but rather to enable them to fully enjoy the lifelong benefits of making music.

Recent studies have shown that students who participate in music programs such as band become the strongest students, academically, in their schools. Band students consistently graduate at the top of their graduating classes, score higher on achievement tests (STAAR, ACT, SAT), and have a higher percentage of earning advanced college degrees. The skills learned through our band program – self-discipline, time management, group cooperation, commitment, responsibility to self and a group, and teamwork – will be reflected in increased self-esteem in successful adult life.

Here in the Sherman MS band program, we wish to instill in every child that it is "fun to be good!" This "culture of band" will produce great performances, which are the fruits of a considerable investment in preparation, hard work, and lessons learned from trial and error. Our goal as musicians is to enjoy new levels of success through communication and self-expression.

Creativity is within us all, and the language of music serves as the perfect vehicle for this journey of personal growth and the development of knowledge and skills. These skills will enable our students to become outstanding musicians and prepare them to become successful and productive young adults.

SMS BAND EXPECTATIONS

Above all, a Bearcat Band member should exhibit the highest standards of character, honesty, and integrity in everything that he or she does. **These specific expectations will help us reach the end of the year with a high level of achievement and a minimal amount of damaged equipment or wasted time.**

In addition to the Sherman Middle School classroom guidelines, the following Band Hall expectations apply:

- Be nice and respectful to all students, staff, and equipment.
- Band students will always follow directions the first time they are given.
- Band Students are to arrive at band class on time and move to start on time. Students arriving after class or rehearsal has started will be marked tardy.
- Students MUST take home their instrument and band binder to practice daily. To achieve success in learning a band instrument, students need to have consistent practice habits. Once their practice habit becomes second nature, playing the instrument becomes a lot of fun! Before the student gets to this stage, it takes a lot of hard work and concentration. We are aware that due to size, some instruments are not allowed on school buses (per transportation rules), but students may practice before school and after school with the director's approval.
- Only band students are allowed in the band hall. DO NOT let your non-band friends enter. This rule is to safeguard our members and equipment.
- Only percussion students may touch percussion instruments and equipment.
- All students will be required to keep a band binder with dividers. They will need a pencil pouch with 4-6 pencils and 4 different colored highlighters, as well as all the accessory items for their instruments, as outlined by a band director. Such items as class notes, tests, band rules, band calendar, band music, and various handouts will be kept in the band binder.
- Students will follow all established classroom and trip procedures; this includes but is not limited to entering/exiting the room, picking up or dropping off their instruments, being prompt with all materials, rehearsal and concert times, and trip itineraries.
- Students will show pride by wearing our formal and informal uniforms completely and correctly. Students are encouraged to wear their band shirts to school!!

Consequences for Breaking Expectations:

- Warning
- Parent Contact
- Loss of privilege (may include lunch detention)
- Office referral
- ★ SEVERE OR MULTIPLE CONSEQUENCES may include permanent removal from the band program or loss of spring trip/festival privilege.

FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, AND OTHER EXPECTATIONS

Our goal is to maintain our facilities so that way they can be used for years to come. Therefore:

- Food, gum, and drinks are not permitted in the band hall (water bottles are allowed).
- All rooms and instrument storage slots should remain clean at all times.
- Students will not deface school or band property (music stands, walls, storage rooms, instruments, etc.)
- Non-band students are prohibited from the band hall areas unless given consent from a director or proper authority.
- Any items left on the floor will be discarded at the end of class time.
- Keep instruments in cases with latches closed in assigned slots when not in use.
- Students should have their names on the outside of their instrument cases in a recognizable place. We recommend a luggage tag that can be labeled with the student's name and school information, and attach it to the handle of the instrument case or bag. **Be sure that your serial number, make, and model are written down at home.** If you need assistance finding this information, feel free to contact a director. Instrument lockers are to be used for instrumental storage ONLY!! Each student is assigned a specific locker, which is to be kept clean. Instruments are to be put in their cases, and the cases are kept closed while in the storage area.
- For your safety and to protect your instrument, absolutely NO gum or candy is allowed in the band hall. It is a dangerous choking hazard to have ANYTHING in your mouth while playing a wind instrument. Also, the ingredients in gum and candy cause short- and long-term damage to all instruments. Playing a school-owned instrument with anything in your mouth will have serious consequences.

DEVICE FREE CAMPUS

Per the law from House Bill 1481, signed by the Governor of Texas, Sherman ISD has adopted a board policy restricting the use of personal items by students during the school day while on school property. This includes cell phones, smartwatches, earbuds, and tablets.

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE POLICY

Any band member possessing or using controlled substances, including tobacco, alcohol, and vapor devices, during any band function will be referred to school authorities, may be subject to removal from the organization, and, if applicable, reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

PERFORMANCES

All members of performing organizations represent Sherman Middle School and Sherman ISD. When traveling to other locations on district vehicles, all students are expected to:

- Be on time.
- Dress appropriately (appropriate concert attire will be addressed leading up to the concert).
- Avoid excessive noise on the bus and in places we travel to.
- Travel on the same bus for all segments of the trip.
- Return equipment to its proper storage place upon arrival at SMS.

All SISD and SMS school rules and policies are in effect at all band functions.

If a student is required to leave an off-campus event or activity, the student's parent/legal guardian must provide written notification and complete the alternate transportation form and turn it in prior to the event to the director **before the student leaves**. Students may leave **ONLY** with his/her parents or a legal guardian. This policy is meant to protect the student, not to inconvenience the parent.

GRADING GUIDELINES

The SMS Bearcat Band programs have instructional objectives related to the mandated Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for grade-level subjects or courses. These objectives are aligned to address the academic skills needed for successful performance in the next grade or next course in a sequence of courses. Assignments, tests, projects, classroom activities, and other instructional activities are designed so that the student's performance indicates the level of mastery of the instructional objectives. The student's mastery level of these objectives is a major factor in determining the grade for a subject or course. Students will be expected to meet the responsibilities of each band class as determined by the director.

Students will be graded on the following:

- **Daily Grade - Responsibility/Participation/Collaboration (40%)**
 - Student demonstrates and manages time and resources to complete polished tasks and meet deadlines.
 - Student attends sectionals and rehearsals at the specified times to collaborate with other students and the director in a specific instructional setting.
- **Assessment - Knowledge and Thinking (60%)** - Student demonstrates understanding of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) concepts, including but not limited to rhythm, pulse and timekeeping, characteristic tone, vocabulary, note identification, notation, posture, and proper playing and hand position for their instrument.
- **Grading Scale:** *Emerging (60-70) *Developing (70-80) *Proficient (80-90) *Advanced (90-100)

The following list is provided to give students and parents examples of items that can be subject to grading.

- The student will be on task and focused during all rehearsals.
- The student will have an instrument, music, a pencil, and supplies.
- The student will be prepared to play his/her part successfully.
- The student will mark music and take notes as needed.
- The student will be expected to improve individual music skills.
- The student's individual skill development will be evaluated through recorded music tests, individual playing tests, scale tests, and/or written tests.
- The student will be evaluated on the improvement of ensemble skills during daily rehearsals.
- The student will be expected to improve his/her performance fundamentals.
- The student will be evaluated for improvement of his/her music fundamentals through daily observation during the "basics" part of each rehearsal and sectionals.
- The student will be expected to demonstrate correct posture, hand position, embouchure, air production, and articulation as monitored during rehearsals.
- The student will be expected to develop a historical knowledge of the literature relative to their respective instrument.
- The student will receive a grade for each performance during a grading period.

Band Fee

Sherman Middle School Band has a mandatory 50\$ band fee that must be paid yearly. This fee covers many different expenses throughout the year. This may be paid all at once or in installments. Please note, we cannot give change, so cash payments will need to be exact.

INSTRUMENT PURCHASE AND RENTAL

Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone, Trumpet, Trombone, and **Percussion** students will be required to either purchase or rent a personal instrument for the band. It is important to acquire an instrument of good quality so that your student is not put at a disadvantage by trying to produce a good sound on an instrument that is difficult to make sound good. Quality instruments require less repair work when treated correctly.

Please see the Accepted Instrument Lists on the [SMS Band Website](#) for more information on appropriate instruments.

When renting or purchasing instruments, we recommend the businesses listed below. These businesses are reputable and offer the recommended instrument rentals/purchases and supplies.

Music and Arts - 4026 US-75, Sherman, TX 75090

Saied Music - 1911 N Loy Lake Rd, Sherman, TX 75090

SCHOOL-OWNED INSTRUMENTS

Oboe, bassoon, bass clarinet, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, french horn, euphonium, and **tuba** students will use a school-owned instrument. The instrument usage fee for all students playing school-owned instruments is \$75 per school year. The instrument usage fee helps cover the cost of routine maintenance and repairs to ensure school-owned instruments remain in excellent playing condition. This fee covers many different expenses throughout the year. This may be paid all at once or in installments. Please note, we cannot give change, so cash payments will need to be exact. Students will be held financially responsible for the cost of repairs needed beyond normal use. **Do not attempt to make any repairs personally, as that can result in more damage to the instrument.**

Students playing school-owned instruments will still need to purchase supplies from the music stores (such as a mouthpiece, a maintenance kit, a metronome, and a book).

UNIFORM INFORMATION

The uniform for any performance will be communicated through email and handouts.

For the advanced bands (Honors, Symphonic, and Concert), the uniform for formal concerts is **concert black**.

Beginner band students will not receive formal uniforms, but will wear "Sunday Best" for their formal concerts (Holiday and Spring concert). For the spring festival performance, students will wear their band t-shirts. Please read the full description below of the uniform that applies to your student.

Advanced Band BOYS:

-Black dress shirt and black dress pants. (*Not Jeans*)

-Black dress shoes (no Crocs, slides, sandals, or athletic shoes) and black dress socks.

Advanced Band GIRLS:

Black dress or Nice Black Shirt and Black pants/skirt (No Jeans)

Black flats (NO heels)

IMPORTANT: A letter with more details about the concert black uniform will go out to the honors, symphonic, and concert bands.

SMS BAND SHIRT

Students are given a band shirt as part of their "informal" uniform. A letter and order form will be given at the start of the school year.

SPRING TRIP AND FESTIVAL

Information regarding the spring festival/clinic and field trip will be given at a later date. This performance and trip are open to all band students at SMS who are **academically eligible and have not had disciplinary issues**. Parent chaperones will be needed to assist on this trip. Information regarding cost, times, dates, and chaperone sign-up will be sent later.

SOLO AND ENSEMBLE

Solo and Ensemble is a festival in late spring. All SMS students are required to learn a solo (TEKS requirement) and are encouraged to attend the solo/festival held in the spring. Solos are taught/rehearsed in class and at home. Students may also choose to perform in a small ensemble with the assistance and recommendation of a band director. Performers at this festival do not compete against each other; they are judged against a system and given a rating.

CONCERTS AND REHEARSALS

At Sherman Middle School, we will have several full band concerts in addition to Solo and Ensemble, and a spring festival. These events are listed on our band event calendar. Band is a performance-based class, and attending these concerts is mandatory for all students. There may be additional rehearsals scheduled after school, leading up to these concerts. These rehearsals are mandatory for all students.

HONORS/SYMPHONIC/CONCERT BAND SECTIONALS

Sectionals are one day a week, either before or after school, for one hour. Sectionals are an extension of the classroom. Students will receive a grade for attendance, and playing assignments may also be taken during this time. A schedule will be given at the start of each semester, and advance notice will be given for all playing assignments.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL BAND HALL RULES

Students who attend morning sectionals or private lessons may access the band hall from **6:30–7:00 a.m.** All other band students may begin dropping off their instruments at **8:00 a.m.** The band hall will close at **5:30 pm.** When the directors have to leave campus for appointments, the band hall will close 10 minutes after dismissal. Students may stay in the band hall (after school hours) to practice *with permission*.

LEAVING EARLY FROM SCHOOL

If your child leaves school early due to illness, a doctor's appointment, or any other reason, they should stop by the band hall to pick up their instrument and band binder before leaving campus. Students should not worry about interrupting class—we **want** them to retrieve these materials so they can continue practicing and stay caught up while they are away from school

Please review the next page and submit the acknowledgment form.

Handbook Acknowledgement

The complete handbook has been emailed to all parents and can also be accessed through the following link: [**SMS Bearcat Band website.**](#)

Please click on the link below and submit the digital signature. If you do not have internet access, please print and return the form below.

[**27-28 Handbook Acknowledgement Form**](#) ← Digital Signature Link
(Due August 28, 2028)

If you cannot access the above link to sign the form digitally, please use the paper copy below.

I have read and understand the policies and expectations contained within the Sherman Middle School Band Handbook. I agree to abide by these policies and expectations. Furthermore, I take full responsibility for my actions and promise to put forth my best effort to ensure the success of the Sherman Middle School Band Program. Lastly, I have looked at the events and dates for the year and agree to participate in all of the rehearsals and performances listed.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date _____

Please complete and submit the digital acknowledgment form or return this signed form to the band directors no later than **August 28, 2026.**